HISTORY OF EKITI

(*From the Beginning to* 1939)

by

MSGR A. OGUNTUYI

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FOREWORD

by Chief J. F. Babalola, the Olora, Oke'la

In his history of Ado Ekiti, Monsignor A. Oguntuyi, performed for the town and its satellites the type of historical service such as the late Oba Akinyele, the Olubadan rendered for Ibadan or that which Dr. Samuel Johnson did for the Yoruba kingdom as it existed up to the first quarter of the present century.

Now in this his latest History of Ekiti, he has chosen a wider horizon and an environment that is ample and full of interesting details for readers who cherish the memory of communal life, culture, occupation, religion and peculiarities of men and women of their country or nation. These things he records and describes as faithfully as possible and yet in a language that the laymen and every pupil of the top classes in the primary school can understand and enjoy. The Ekiti of this History includes among others quite rightly all the domain of the Deji of Akure. His selection and presentation of the facts and other materials of this History reveal the objectivity and the lack of bias characteristic of the author. The religious prejudice or partial affection that is often discernible in the works of clerks in Holy Orders are absent from the accounts that the author presents to us.

The range of topics dealt with in this History is not limited exclusively to purely historical matters. There is ample geographical setting for and an anthropological approach to the issues of the origins, social organisation, habits, similarities and dissimilarities of dialects among the different clans and communal idiosyncracies of the different 'Kingdoms' of the Ekiti people. It is a sociologist's account of Ekiti people, past and present.

It is not however to be presumed that the author has exhausted all that is relevant as history under the chapters and major topics discussed in the book. In a few cases, he indicates doubt as to the authenticity of his story or some statements in it. Thus while discussing the order of seniority among the Ekiti Obas he first considers the opinions of Oba Adeleye II (the Elekole) and Eyeowa (the Ajero) both of which he compares with the view of

Mr. S. C. C. Swayne who was the District Officer to Ekiti in 1935, before coming finally to the inconclusive opinion of his own in the following words: "Maybe seniority was forced on the Obas or they tried to avoid it in order not to be forced to be under a particular Oba".

The two or more versions of a story which he sometimes resorts to have the virture of leaving his readers to decide on their own what to beleive.

While controversial issues may mar the quality of some historical accounts they work differently with Monsignor Oguntuyi. When for example at page 28 where he discusses the attitude of Ekitis to the birth of twins he say that the mothers of twins or triplets were never ostracised, he is not speaking for all Ekitis. At Araromi Quarters of Ado Ekiti the home of my great grand–mother and the story is still told to their descendants how both of them and the house where they lived were deserted immediately great grand-mother was delivered of a set of twins. Until the female of the twins was allowed to die by painful neglect the other relations did not return to the house.

When elsewhere in the course of his history we are told that the election of Ekiti Oloja/Owa—till now made by Royal Family he has made a statement that will certainly win the approval of the Princes and Princesses of the Ewi chieftaincy Families but which the senior chiefs that constitute the college of Kingmakers for the Ewi chieftaincy will deny as correct or true. The election is regarded as their own prerogative.

The wealth of statiscal information which the book contains is a blessing to students of the history of Ekitiland. There are lists of British Colonial Administrators under whom the Ekitis achieved progress in educational and material terms while old habits and code of morals substantially disappeared. The figures of criminal and other cases as they were dealth with in increasing numbers from 1915 to 1934 indicate unmistakenly the decadence in morality, the decreased degree of respect for age and the more frequent lapses in the abstinence practised in former times in sexual relations and behaviours.

The author himself refers to what he calls two main objections by some of his readers: "That Ado centre is too prominent in the book" is, according to him, one of these objections. His explanation

that Ado is natural centre of Ekiti as a result of which it has always been the receiving end of Ekiti events, quite, I want to add, however, that at the time when Ekiti consisted of 16 independent kingdoms—(including Akure), Ado Ekiti kingdom had boundaries with thirteen of the other kingdoms—leaving only two obaships with which the Ados had no land connection. Ado Ekiti is in fact the melting pot of the variegated culture, the changing habits, the national aspirations as well as the cherished philosophies and moral codes of the entire Ekiti people.

The second objection, to wit, that the history narrated by the author had been overtaken by events, has no merit and needs no better reply than that made by the author himself.

Finally, I like to commend this handbook of the History of Ekiti to schools all over Ekiti land in particular and to the departments of History and sociology in our educational institutions. Teachers and pupils in our schools will find the contents of the book very easy to grasp while the narrative and descriptive styles of Monsignor Oguntuyi can be imitated to advantage. Under the guidance of capable and competent History teachers discussions with local elders would enable classes to augment the facts of this history, so that later editions might give readers richer and fuller account of the remarkable people known as the EKITIS.

PREFACE

Most of the information contained in this book are collected from oral tradition. Only some manuscripts and booklets are available on Ekiti and they are made use of. Certain difficulties attended writing Ekiti History: (*a*) Only the memories of favourable events tended to be preserved. If a hunter was killed by a wild beast, the story would never be told. The account could however be inferred from other events, for instance, Ifa oracle could forbid the son of the hunter to carry a gun. A woman who lost some of her children preserves the pictures of only one those alive.

The writer knows of a case where a respectable lady died during an outbreak of fire in a house. Nobody would dare to tell the story directly. On the other hand. It could be narrated that she became a bird in order to escape the flame. (*b*) Frequent changes of names of towns or villages. In recent years, Emure changed to Iworopora, Iyapa became Ayetoro, Uyin changed to Iyin. Inu became Ayegunle, Oro was Iloro, Orin changed to Ayebode, Igbira changed to Ayedun and Odo-Ehin became Odo-Owa etc. As for names, Ogunyemi, became Oluyemi and Ifamuboni was changed to Babamuboni. etc.

Apart from Oral tradition, a lot of historical truths can be sifted: (*a*) From Town/Family Oriki. There is scarcely any Ekiti town or family without Oriki. Where you hear "Omo amila pekoro uku" you may strongly suspect Benin, Ondo Origin. Where the Oriki is "Omo arijeran edun". The family originally came from Owo etc. (*b*) From family Festivals: Families who are devotees of Orisala have their origin from Oshun area. The feast of Igbarigi celebrated by the Odofin Odo-Ado is traceable to Benin. (*c*) From Ekiti Myths like that of Oore of Otun. He traced his origin to the Sea god (Olokun) landing for the first time at Epe (Ijebu) and (d) From Legends which are common. The legend of Oluorogbo at Aramoko is a good example.

Regarding Ekiti Obas: The three methods employed by the Royal Families in reckoning the number of Obas are very helpful.[1]

1. Unfortunately the names did not appear to be as important as the number.

1. Some towns keep a collection of pebbles. Each pebble represents an Oba. Oye Ekiti is a good example.
2. Some have a string of cowries. Each cowry represents an Oba. Effon Alaaye is a classic example of this and
3. Others have a group of women recounting the oriki of the preceding Obas and singing their praises at certain times of the year. This is very common.

In 1886, Lagos Government was severed from that of Ghana (Gold Coast) Government and was constituted a separate colony of Lagos. Captain Alfred C. Moloney was appointed its first Governor. The first public undertaking of Governor Moloney was the settlement of the Kiriji War which had dragged on for thirteen years. His effort was blessed and the Treaty putting an end to the war was signed by both parties on 4th June, 1886 after three months of hard negotiation.[1] For the next fourteen years relentless efforts were made by the British Officials to bring the situation to normal. Ekitis were very lucky. They were farmers and traders on a small scale. The only one whose life was absolutely bundled with war was Fabunmi of Okemesi. His love for war was the immediate cause of Ekiti-parapo war as will be seen later. Others who were interested in war, were partially war–mongers and partially farmers. It took little time to keep them quiet.

In 1893, British protectorate was establised at Ibadan and Captain R. L. Bower was sent to Ibadan as the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner for all Yoruba land. In the same year, 1893, Captain Bower visited Ekiti and everywhere he went he made people feel at home with British Government.

The Protectorate of Yorubaland

Ibadan and the British government signed the Treaty of Yoruba-land in 1893. In this way Captain Bower with a number of Hausa soldiers took up residence at Ibadan and began to look after the interest of Yorubaland including Ekiti. To keep a check on the Ilorins, Captain Bower with two hundred soldiers moved to Odo-Otin and resided there until the power of Ilorin was completely broken. While the British Office were at Odo-Otin, two other important things happened namely:

1. See Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, pp. 508 &

1. All Ekitis who had interest in warfare were invited and cautioned seriously to keep the peace.
2. Ekiti Obas were registered but neither the signing for the protectorate nor the nature of the protectorate was brought to the notice of the Ekiti people. All the Ekiti knew was that the war with Ibadan was over through the mediation of whitemen, and peace must reign everywhere.

White men were later seen in Ekiti proclaiming the agreement at Kiriji, and warning offenders against the proclamations of Kiriji. Ekiti Obas were also taken into confidence and any Baale who raised his head against them was punished. Ekiti Obas were invited and cautioned. Thus the Olosi, the Onijan, the Arajaka etc, were warned.[1] By that time everyone was convinced that Kiriji war or any other war would have no recurrence and that Kidnapping, human sacrifice and all criminal tendencies perpetrated by the servants of war mongers were entirely over

Between 1893 and 1913, many visits were paid to Ekiti, but they were more of a friendly type, and the visitors talked of trade and good roads in particular. During one of the visits the Olode and the Onimesi in Ado district were deported by Mr. J.E.H. Humphrey, the first Commissioner in charge of Ijesa and Ekiti. He was resident at Oke-Imo, Ilesa.

OKE-IMO: In course of time a British Officer was appointed for Ilesha and Ekiti with residence at Oke-Imo, Ilesha, as Commissioner. Thus the British representatives came closer to Ekiti. They continued to pay regular visits to Ekiti.

Two important incidents occurred at Ado during this period:

1. An Oyo trader was murdered at Amu. All efforts to trace the culprit proved abortive and
2. The death of Olajolumo. His body was neither recovered, nor was the assassin known. The British government therefore in 1913 appointed Mr. J.E.H. Humphrey as the District Officer for Ekiti, with seat at Ado-Ekiti. The intention was to keep Ado quiet. Mr. Humphrey arrived at Ado in the same year and from then Ado became the seat of a British officer for Ekiti.

The British Officials for a time acted merely in an advisory capacity. As from 1920, a gradual social reform began in Ekiti.

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1. Ado History p. 81.

The Government was centralised unannounced. The Obas were asked to meet at Ado-Ekiti. The meeting was called "Pelupelu" (The calling of the Lords). The Resident was its Chairman, and without much ado the British ways of seeing and judging things were introduced. Divorce and taxation came into force, roads were built and gradually local government law was introduced. Christianity was also introduced and in order to secure the services of Catechists and pastors for the new religion, two schools—Emmanuel and St. George's were opened at Ado-Ekiti. It was soon seen that schools were an asset to the progress of Christianity. During the following decades every church, no matter how small endeavoured to have a school attached. Ekiti became very thirsty for education. Colleges and Grammar schools were established. Education enabled Ekiti boys and girls to play a leading role in affairs of the country.

Objections

Two main objections are raised by some of my readers. The first is that Ado centre is too prominent in the book. The second is that the book does not keep abreast of the time. It is overtaken by events.

In the first place, Ado is the natural centre of Ekiti and as such it has always been the receiving end for Ekiti events. A record of these events must give prominency to Ado. Nothing more has been done.

2. That the book is overtaken by events: such events as the division of Ekiti, the coronation of some Ekiti Obas etc., are not mentioned. History is a record of the past not of future. The book treats of Ekiti up to 1939/40. It has nothing to do with what happens later.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby express my sincere gratitude to Professor J. F. Ade Ajayi and to Mr. E. Ola who helped to read the original manuscript and for their wise suggestions; to Professor G. Afolabi Ojo who typed the manuscript and supplied suitable maps to it, to Ekiti Obas in general but to the Ajero, Eye-Owa, to the Elekole, Oba Adeleye II and to Oore, Olubiyin II, in particular; to Chief J. E. Babatola, the Olora of Ado Ekiti for his complimentary FOREWORD; last but not least, to Mr. J. B. Ajayi for his ceaselessly encouraging the publication of the book.

I wish also to acknowledge with gratitude the help I got from countless others.

Msgr. A. Oguntuyi,
21st August 1976

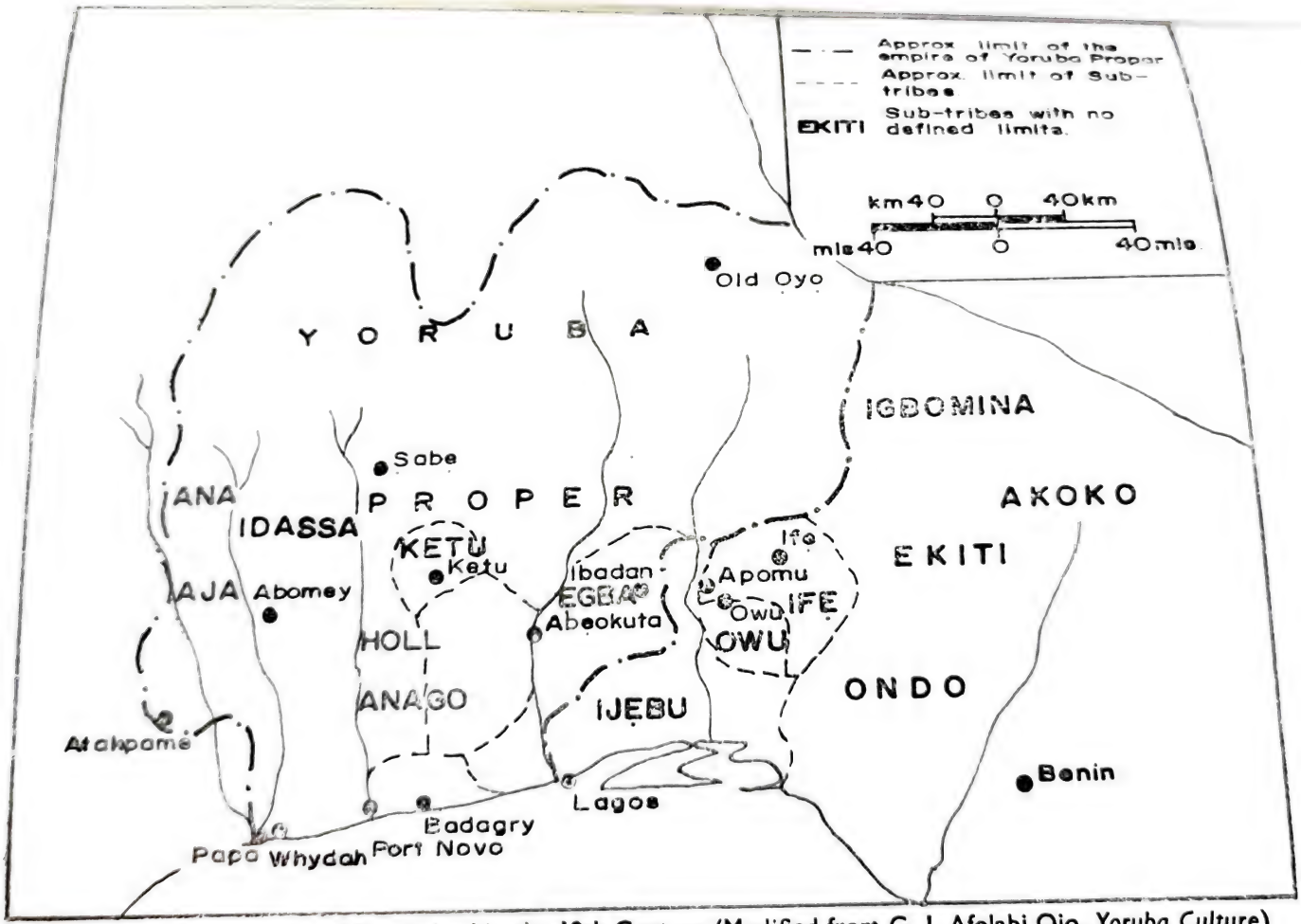

Fig. 1 — The Protectorate of Yorubaland in the 19th Century (Modified from G. J. Afolabi Ojo, *Yoruba Culture*)

Part I

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The History of many places tells the story of the wars waged by the countries in question. Their kings are great by the successes achieved in war time. Their nobles show their nobility by their achievements at the war front.

Ekiti has relatively little to be proud of as far as war is concerned. The history of Ekiti is to be considered under different aspects. If war comes in, as in the case of Ekiti parapo war, it is purely accidental and as a result of the farmers being driven to the walls. Even without too many wars, Ekiti has a noteworthy past, as revealed in this book.

Ekiti Origin: You may ask, where did Ekitis come from ? Ekiti is a compact country. As you come into it, you normally feel that you are part of it.

The aborigines of Ekiti came from different parts in search of hunting grounds and for farming. But as from the 16th century Odudua groups began to come as rulers of the land.

According to Dr. O. Johnson[1] "The Ekiti are among the aboriginal elements of the country absorbed by the invaders from the East". But Dr. Saburi Biobaku thought that the invaders were probably in two groups. Mr. R. C. Abraham stated that "The inhabitants of Ekiti were

(*a*) those from the West (possibly from Ife in the 16th century;

(*b*) Ibinnin people who came into Ado Ekiti, Akure and Ikere probably in the 17th century and

(*c*) Possibly some small immigration from Ijebu Ode in the 17th century."

There could be some truth in this, certain similarities showing Benin origin exist and names like Arinjale (awujale can be traced to Ijebu.) Whatever be the views on Ekiti origin, two things are certain:

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1. History of the Yorubas, page 23.

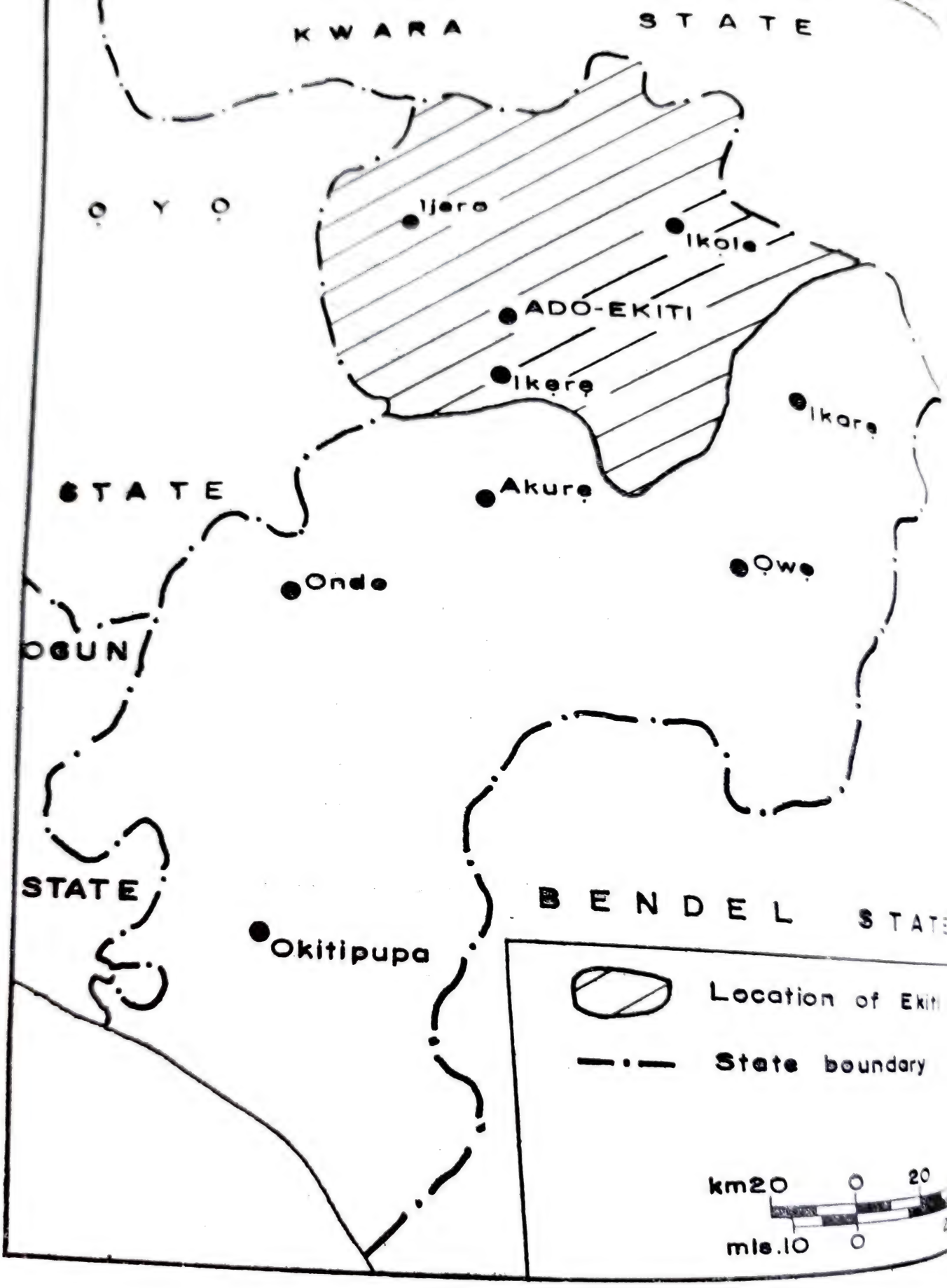

Fig. 2 — Area of Ekitiland within Ondo State

1. The Ekiti Obas with their followers are different from the people and
2. Movements into Ekiti are still in progress.

In about 1921, there was only one Igbira immigrant in Ekiti. He was *Sule*. He borrowed some money from the late Chief Asamo, Philip Akinyede, and promised to work for him on yearly payment basis. Every year, he brought in some others. Today, there are over two thousands Igbira in Ekiti. They settled down comfortably and intermarry with Ekiti. As from thirties, Urhobos, Ibos and Hausas began to stream in. The Urhobos helped to tap palm-wine and to make palm oil. They accepted no money for their work. They shared the number of tins of palm oil collected with the owner of the farm. The Ibos and Hausas were traders in various forms. They also worked on the farms as labourers.

The Ekiti treated in this book embraces:

(*a*) The aborigines of Ekiti
(*b*) The Obas or Odudua group.

Others who have settled in Ekiti long before the advent of Europeans.

The term *Ekiti* denotes an interior or hinterland area as opposed to a maritime area. It also means Mound and in that it is the same as *Okiti*.

Ekitiland is well watered but it has no large rivers. It is mountaneous, fertile and well wooded. It is rich in many natural resourses useful for human comfort.

Boundary: Ekiti expands to Kwara State on the North, to Akoko on the East, to Owo and Ondo on South and to Ijesa and Oshun on the West. It has an area of about 2,100 square miles and a population of 2,000,000 according to 1963 census.

Ekiti Villages:

It is important to note that Ekiti villages are not an extension of towns. For instance, Iyin, Igede and Awo are not an extension of Ado-Ekiti unlike villages around Ondo. Most Ekiti villages were once important towns for years autonomous and were either conquered or annexed or being reduced by war, sought protection under a big town. Villages around Ondo were farm settlements which gradually became villages. The inhabitants are not happy until they got to Ondo. As a matter of fact, Ondo villages are virtually vacated at least once a year, at the Ogun festival. Villages

in Ekiti are not happy until they are back to their villages. If they build in central towns it is for economical reasons.

The rate at which some of the villages are growing is fantastic. A visit to Oke and Odo Igbira (Ikole) now Ayedun in 1923 and 1973 shows a remarkable difference. The same thing holds for Arigidi, Uyin (Iyin) and all the other villages. Central towns continue to grow as centres of trade. Ifaki for instance moves faster than Ido. The two towns have equal opportunity being on the main road. Egosi (Ilupeju) may rival Oye and Ayedun can compete with Ikole on many grounds.

Many Ekiti villages have great historical background which cannot be overlooked. The saying "Alara ei sun 'nu odi aba re" (The Alara is never buried at Ara but at Erijiyan) makes it difficult to think of Aramoko without Erijiyan. In the same strain, it is contended that "Ogun k'Ado ba si laisi Uyin, etipa l'Ado gbekele". (Ado is foredoomed in any war it wages without the backing of Uyin) What Ibadan is to Oyo, Uyin is to Ado-Ekiti. "Ogun i j'Ado, ogun i j'Uyin, ogun j'Iworoko, omo Aroloye"[1] showed a deep relationship of the central town and its villages. Iworoko was for years the cradle of the Ewis.

Ekiti language is Yoruba but it has its own peculiarities:

A short trip around Ekiti reveals the considerable diversity of Ekiti dialects. Take Ado as the starting point and travel through Ilawe to Igbara-Odo and Ogotun, you will be confronted with Ijesha influence. Go through Erinjiyan and Ara, Ikogosi and Effon, the same influence surfaces but towards Okemesi listen to the women singing, you would think you were in one of Ibadan villages. At Otun the influence of the first colonialist—the Ilorins—pervades every nook and corner of the place. At Ayede, you will feel you were at Lagos, though the language is Iyagba Ekiti. At Omu and Itapaji, you find yourself once more in Oyo villages, though in the heart of Ekiti forest. Ten miles further bring you to Ikole, an open town of about 46,000 people. Here everything is Ekiti. At Ilu-omoba, a village of about 2,000 people, the dialect varies literally from house to house. If you continue to move eastwards within seven miles, you are at Aisegba, another two miles you are at Agbado and six miles bring you to Imesi where the people speak different dialects—Akoko, Ekiti, Ibadan and Oyo.

The explanations of these differences, are contained in the oral traditions of the people, in their folk-lores, in their music, in their festivals and in their history.

Ekiti Obas:

All Ekiti Obas except the Oore, claimed to be children of Odudua and to have come from Ife. The Obas displaced heads of the original inhabitants, but tradition is silent about them except at Ado-Ekiti where the Elesun is speciafically mentioned as an Oba and Aaye whom the Oore maintained was gradually subdued and scattered. Similarly the Alakure at Akure was conquered by the leader of the Ife group.

Respect for Obas:

Ekiti had a great respect for Obas but the respect was neither military as you see in Oyo area nor despotic as in Ilorin. It was a dignifying type of respect. It made you feel that your family did not depend on the Oba for their livelihood but must honour him according to his position. To an Ekiti mind, the Oba was next to the gods. The following forbidden things were the exponents of the respect:

1. I-an gb'ade Oloja deri io,
   you must not test the size of your head with an Obas crown.
2. I-an gb'eu Oloja i-borun,
   you must not try your size with his garment.
3. I-an b'olori i-dore,
   you must not make an Oba's wife your girl friend.
4. I-an k'erun i s'ule Oloja su ebu la bu i an, while cursing you must not face an Oba's palace.
5. Oni ko ba ti su Olori a yangan, uponri Oloja kete a ba wi, if you say an Oba's wife would be childless, you expose yourself to the condemnation of all the Obas.
6. A-ri b'Oloja i s'agbe nijemi l'oko l'udi oro, your farm must not border on that of the Oloja, hence I have no farm near the Oro tree.
7. Oba i ri oja, Oba i ri oku, I-an gb'oku i koja l'ode Oba, it was taboo for an Oba to see the market, ditto for the dead. The dead must not be carried across the front of his palace.

8. Ologun mojoye, o da ko mei yoko, o da ko mei yomi, o da ko soye a je.
   At his installation, the song: you are made a chief you must no longer till the ground or fetch water, you live on chieftaincy, remind him of freedom from manual labour.
9. So mi, so mi l'a i gbo l'ule Oba, i-an i gbo gbe lemi, Help to unload is what you hear in the palace, not help to lift.

An Ekiti Oba is not despotic and cannot be. Each Oba had a limited sphere of activity which was not based on ability to wage war. The subjects are always busy in the farms and anybody who could be an obstruction to going to farm freely would not be elected.

Although Ekiti elders and in particular kingmakers spoke of Ifa oracle as having the last say in the election of a candidate, the Ifa always chose the one who was chosen by the people. The kingmakers were always careful to choose a good man. If he tended to be despotic, he would be told "to go and sleep" (si igba wo) (that is commit suicide in order to retain the royal honour).

An Ekiti Oba was never alone. His brothers and sisters and children lived among the people. They knew the mind of the people. Moreover the members of the rulling family were a constant check on him.

British Take Over

It was under an enactment of Abolition of Human Sacrifice that Ekiti was brought under the British influence. The Ekiti Obas never gave up the rights of governing their countries according to their law and custom. The British Officials at first merely held that there should be nothing in these laws and customs repugnant to humanity. Moreover, British Officials visiting Ekiti always emphasized trade and peace. Gradually however, they encouraged Obas to take salaries and to build good roads and in order to achieve these objectives, the people should pay an annual levy of six shillings each. In addition, the Ewi and the Elekole were allowed to collect money from their subjects for roofing their palaces with corrugated iron sheets.

Education

In Ekiti, education followed the wake of Christianity, just as trade followed that of Islam, but it was the building of motor

roads that really enabled the people to appreciate the value of both education and trade.

Over the years, the main occupation of Ekiti was agriculture but as from 1930, schools began to be built with all seriousness. Schools and colleges were established in many parts of Ekitiland. Teachers of Ekiti origin were later found in many parts of Nigeria. A few small-scale industries were also established. Weaving industries were of special note.

"For centuries, the Ekiti kingdoms have been a backwater, continually raided for slaves by more powerful neighbours. Today their people are determined to eradicate this stigma and the Division has had a reputation among Administrative Officers for being one of the most peaceful and progressive in the country"—P. C. Lloyd, Yoruba Land Law P. 187.

Ekitis being farmers had reputation for being peace-ful and progressive. Their ambition was to be allowed to make their farms in peace. Before the British rule you could carry a basket full of gold around Ekiti without being molested.

After the introduction of the British Rule, for a long time there was only one Native Court functioning in Ekiti and few cases went into it. The few cases were mainly divorce. An Ekiti man did not indulge himself in intrigue and strife for power. He was not fond of litigation. He had respect for his Oba and in case of quarrel the decision of his Oba was final.

Ekitis were deeply religious but they had no time for idle worships which kept them away from the farm for days. They were relaxed and not in an undue hurry. As farmers, they could not afford to be slow in attending to their crops. A serious querrel was not usual in Ekiti since they did'nt want to indulge in anything that might prevent them from going to farm the next day. Hence wrestling was used as a medium of letting off pent-up energy and also settling disputes among members of the same age group. Whoever was knocked out accepted defeat graciously.

Land: Ekitis originally made their farms around their settlements but as each settlement grew larger the necessity to look for virgin land arose. Many went two or three miles to cultivate lands. They came back to report their success to their Oba as a matter of courtesy. Such farm took the name of adjacent river or hill and became the property of that family. In course of time almost all

Ekiti lands were acquired as family lands. There was no friction between the families of the same town or settlement. Frequent family boundary disputes arose between families from one town and another. Such family disputes were perennial. Even when they were settled, the settlement usually lasted only a few years. Boundary disputes often led to terrible bitterness which after many years might end naturally.

One of the towns in dispute might grow larger and more powerful than the other and thus silence the opponent. In some cases war might reduce one of the towns to nothing and thus silenced her. Itaji is a classic example. Where this natural stoppage did not occur, success has not been encouraging.

Because of shifting cultivation practised by Ekiti farmers, some families acquired large tracts of lands in two or three places in the same locality. New comers could always approach such families for a piece of land. It was easy to secure one. All you needed do was to supply the owners with some kegs of palm-wine and a few kolanuts and put your case before them. Some Ekiti towns were close and the inhabitants had to travel far to get farms.

"Ekiti people are a peaceful and law abiding community. They are lovers of rural life and are well endowed with farm lands and as such, land disputes are rare." "It is refreshing to know that there is a marked absence of intrigue and of striving for power among these people which is sometimes a prominent feature in native life in place not so far distant."—Captain Weir and A.C.C. Swayne.

Markets and Trade

Every town and village in Ekiti has a market which belongs to it exclusively. Some large towns have more than two or three markets. Ado-Ekiti up to 1940, had ten markets. One of them, Oja Ojido, is of special socio-economic and religious significance. Every main market is located in the front of the palace of the Oba or village head. Apart from buying and selling, the main market is the centre of all town activities. It was the forum of all unusual meetings. There, public offenders were punished or executed. It is believed that a mad man could be cured if he had not wandered through the market. In some places e.g. Ikole, there is a special chief in charge of the main market and once a year, he has to appear there to do some imaginary buying and selling all by himself alone.

After the tribal wars, some Ekiti towns in imitation of Ibadan and Ilorin began to keep market in the evenings. Examples are Ikere, Aramoko and Effon Alaaye. Since most Ekitis were farmers, they sold and bought their needs during the day. They took their evening meals between 4 and 6 p.m. and retired to bed as early as 8 p.m.

New yams were forbidden in the main market until certain feasts were celebrated. During such festivals the Oba or Baale would eat new yams for the first time. It was taboo for a woman to be naked in the market place. If by accident she was naked, for example when fighting, she must appease numberless gods.

Crafts and Industries

Guilds of wood carvers, blacksmiths, potters, mat weavers and basket markers were formed. None of these crafts was practised alone. They were done conjunctly with farming. A tailor or wood carver was as much a farmer as any other.

Chapter Two

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE COMING OF EKITI OBAS

THE FORMING OF EKITI SOCIETY (1)

Farmers and Hunters

Many years ago, people from different parts in search of fertile land came and settled in Ekiti. They were hunters and farmers. Since the people were moved by the same reasons to occupy the vacant land they easily befriended one another and lived in peace. They became the aboriginal inhabitants of Ekiti. They lived in scattered settlements surrounded by their farms and hunting grounds.

They were not cave dweller, they knew how to erect buildings with mud walls and roofs of grass or thatched leaves. They dressed scantily and were never nude in private or public. The farmers cultivated the land and grew various tubers. The hunters lived mostly on fruits and wild life which were found in abundance in the forests. The farmers and the hunters lived in peace and followed a simple code of conduct. In case of hunger a hunter was free to take anything he could eat from a neighbour's farm. He must not carry anything away. He must leave a sign by which the owner of the farm would know it was hunter who tampered with the farm products. In course of time, some settlements attracted more new comers than others and grew into larger settlements. Some families were more influential than others and they acted as leaders of their settlements. This natural development left the post of leadership open. A more qualified family could come anytime to supersede the former leaders.

Although as a rule, farmers had no time for war, occasional disputes could not be ruled out and so weaker families would naturally seek the protection of the stronger ones. Language was no barrier. Ekitis easily adapted themselves to their surroundings. At the turn of the century, it would cause trouble to say "Pele"

to an Ado man. Ten years later, pele was the common salutation in Ekiti. Ekiti love foreigners and their language. Although distinct groups of Ekiti people lived apart, they gradually spread out to settle in agriculturally suitable areas. Many villages and towns shifted about freely. As Dr. Akintoye pointed out, "tribal differences, claims and counter claims lead to leadership, to formation of larger units and boundaries"[1] in the Ekiti country.

Ekiti Domestic Life:

Ekiti domestic life up to 1900 was simple and artless and rather permanent. It was not subject to rapid changes as you see today. There were few outside influences. As farmers, their main concern was the farm which required daily attention. There was no farmer's Union or Co-operative Association. Farm produce consisted of foodstuffs for domestic consumption. Exchange was by barter. Currency was unknown, not even cowries, in the early days.

(*a*) *Food:* The stable food in Ekiti for years was pounded Yam (Iyan). A wealthy man ate it three times a day, the poor once a day (evening). When yams were not available, any other article of food could be used as a substitute, but it must be pounded. Thus corn would be ground, boiled and pounded. That was called "Iyan-Agidi", plantains would be boiled and pounded, called "Iyan Ogede". Elubo Ogede or Elubo Isu was unknown until after the return of the slaves (the Atoyobos) towards the close of 19 century.

Many of the slaves who served at Ibadan or Abeokuta brought the idea of preparing "Elubo" from yam (Elubo Isu) and plantain (Elubo Ogede). "Gari" came from Ijebu and "Koko" from Ibadan. The most important meal was that of the evening, taken between 4 and 6 p.m. Ekiti dreaded eating late at night; they said: "A jeun oru, ko jasan, a baka amutoto lobe" (When you eat late in the night you always have some insects in your food).

The farms being within easy reach, all the members of the family were always at home in the evening. Food was served usually at the parlour of the father of the family, (the parlour may be screened with a kind of mat called Awere (Arinrin). The younger children 5–12 years of age should be around to answer their call. It was not usual for children of about five upward to dip their hands into the plate with their father. The first morsel went to the Esu (devil) outside the entrance to the compound. One or two children would

take the morsel to the Esu, put a small quantity on the Esu and eat the rest. (All that was necessary was to say "This is your food" and then to finish the food on the spot). The second morsel (big enough for a feed) was given to the eldest of the children standing behind the mat curtain. The next morsel to the next oldest and so on. They thus collected their portions and went behind the curtain to eat.

A child that wanted a second helping turned to his mother. You were unfortunate if you had lost your mother. Drink consisted of palm-wine, no gin, no whisky, not even pito as in Oyo area. It was served after meal, never before. Hence the saying "Mo je, mo mu, langbo" (It is normal for drinks to follow food). Only elderly children about 13 upward waited for this palmwine.

(*b*) *Clothing:* Clothing was made from cotton, Eruku and Raffia (Iko). It was the duty of women to weave cloths. Men produced the materials. It was usual for even the rich to dress moderately. Feasts of dress took place in many places, for example, Okorobo at Ifaki and Alile at Ise. In general the Ekitis appeared in their best only on feast days and visitation to distant friends or relation. It was usual to ask a person in fine dress whether he was celebrating. Though dressed moderately, an Ekiti paid much attention to personal appearance.

In Ekiti until recently there was no Dandogo, Kanbe, Kapo and Alongo. A boy or a girl up to the age of ten might put on nothing. He or she had clothes but no obligation to put them on. After the age of puberty, a boy and a girl put on apron (Ibante) and (Tobi) respectively. Singlet was unknown. When singlets appeared the first time, they were called "Ifun Oni" (The intestine of crocodile) because they were believed to have been made of the intestines of Crocodile. Next to apron was "Iketa" for a boy and "Ikeji[1]" for a girl. It was not easy to have two of each at a time. The apron of a boy from a rich family was longer than that of a boy from a poor family. There was no difference between the size of the dress of a girl rich or poor. The freedom of a girl to appear as she liked ended with her maiden-hood.

1. There is scarcely any difference between Iketa & Ikeji except that Iketa is made of three native loom pieces and Ikeji two

For years, buba and etu (cap) were exclusively used by hunters. The hunter's buba was lined and open on both sides. The pocket was large enough to take in small animals. The etu (cap) was long enough to be bent forward or sideways. It took in a lot of things particularly "Agira" (Tobacco gun powder). In this connection both hunters and elderly men used "Etu". The apron style was followed by "Beregbelede" (bend down and carry a pig). It was like a boxer's pant but voluminous. Later on, Oyo and Ilorin traders introduced "Sokoto" (trousers). It became common after the return of the slaves. The Obas used sokoto for years before the commoners. They could afford it and new things came to them first. Most of them too used "Yeeri" Yeeri was like Tobi but bigger. It was peculiar to elderly women. An elderly woman in full attire put on

1. Yeeri.
2. Iro.
3. Iponlerun and
4. Gele.

In about 1919, elderly women were arrested for not putting on Buba. Before that time buba was unknown as part of women's dress. Those arrested were only threatened and released. Within a month later, it became general in Ekiti for women to put on buba. The only exception were the Olori, (Oba's wives). Buba was taboo for them. Agbada was in common use over the years but very few people could afford it.

Personal cleanliness was always imperative. It was always considered desirable to bathe at least once a day. Farmers returning from farm made it a point of duty to take their bath in the stream nearest the settlement. The term "Obun" was used for a man or woman who failed to take his or her bath at least once a day. The term made a deeper impression when applied to a woman. Hence the expressions: "Obun r'uku oko foran mo" (a filthy woman laid the blame on the death of her husband): "Obun wera re, iyan i se riri" (Filthy woman take your bath, pounded yam is not the cause of filth). In addition to regular bath, men had to shave their hairs and women plait theirs. While the unmarried plait their hairs in varying styles, married ones had various styles of hair-do, namely: Ogo, Osu etc. Only a woman who had recently lost her husband could leave her hairs loosely or shave her hairs. Camwood (Osun) from Ekiti forests and Tiroo (eye-lid markers) from Ilorin were freely used as cosmetics.

(*c*) *Building:* The aborigines of Ekiti were simple in their ways of life as well as in the buildings they erected.

The buildings were all bungalows and were built in compounds known as Agbo-Ile (a group of houses). The compound was usually circular in shape enclosing a large area. Each compound was divided into several compartments serving the need of all the families and their dependants. In the open space in the centre of the compound "Aede" were kept goats, and sheep at night to prevent leopard from destroying them.

There was no difference between the building of the rich and the poor except that one was more spacious than the other. All buildings were square or rectangular in shape. Each house had one main entrance. Along the entrance was a gutter called "Ojuto" (Urinary). It was the family urinary. There, the god of iron, (Ogun) was worshipped. At the other end of the entrance outside the Esu was represented with mud sculpture and there he was daily propitiated.

In course of time, the compounds were expanded with several new compounds being added. The first open space embraced the compartments of old women and strangers. This place was usually lower than the others and was called "Odo Aede". The upper part was Oke Aede or "Akodi". Akodi was reserved for the highest authority in the family.

In each compartment, no one had more than a room and a parlour. Wives who were influential might have a room each. Part of the parlour was slightly raised and used as kitchen attached. Before about 1920, Rooms had entrances but no doors. The only door was the main gate made of heavy wood or a number of mid-ribs of the oilpalm, joined with long pegs and ropes. The walls of the buildings were generally six to seven feet high. Roofing was done with ropes and grass (Aga or Isa) or leaves (Ewe gbodogi). The leaves were smoked everyday, they had to be replaced every year to minimize leakage. The floor and the walls were plastered with coloured clay by women. Some of the women were artistic, they could paint with the husks of corn, figures of lizards or in case of a warrior's house, his victory pictures. The frequently rubbed with animal dungs and Sometimes, the floors were so well

Mats and hides of ani as chairs and

privilege of Obas. If a hunter killed a leopard, he must bring the hide to the Oba. He could not turn it to his own use.

The household furniture consisted of cooking utensils, waterpots, a mortar with pestles, large calabashes for carrying loads and gourd for collecting palm-wine. Smaller types of gourds were cut and dressed and used as cups for drinking palmwine. Coconut shell was also used as a cup for drinking water. It is called "Ukere". Each room in a house was built with mud ceiling, carefully and laboriously prepared with mud and ashes and thus saved from termites. It was also made fireproof. After the death of the master of the compound, his own compartment might fall to ruin. Hence the term "Baale ule ku, Ule dahoro". (Father of the house dies his house falls to ruin.

Marriage

A The normal process of Marriage had three stages

(*a*) Mimo Ana (Introduction)

(*b*) Idana (Formal Betrothal) and

(*c*) Obutun (Igbeyawo)—Marriage.

Introduction There were two ways: (a) If the father of a girl had promised to give his daughter in marriage, all that was done was to fix a day when the formal introduction would be made. The date would then be communicated to the parents of the girl. On that day the bridegroom-to-be would go, accompanied by his parents and friends to present palm wine and kolanuts to the parents of the bride-to-be. The gifts are accepted and prayers said for the prospective couple.

If there was no such promise, the boy or his father or mother must do some spade work, otherwise the gift of palmwine and kola-nuts would be rejected. Contacts should be made and the consent of at least the father of the girl should be got before approaching them formally. After the formal introduction, the parents of the girl would consult Ifa Oracle which always said something good. "A ki i gbo buburu lenu Ifa". (Ifa never says anything evil) From now on the boy or his mother must visit the parents of the girl regularly. On feast days, they must send customary presents to the girl. If parents had many sons, they might not have any particular son in view as the future partner of the girl.

She or her parents might make the choice. In this case, the parents would encourage the son of their choice to visit them regularly and his father or mother seeing him would leave the girl to him. Once the future partner was known the intended must neither pass by his house nor salute or answer him when he saluted her.

This custom was intended to prevent familiarity breeding contempt. From now on the customary present will be given, usually on feast days (each town has a specific time for this). For girls under ten, only three yams are presented on each occasion. As from the age of about ten, the yams would be increased to five. At about eighteen, the yams should be nine. At twenty or more depending on the growth of the girl, the yams should be eleven. This was the final stage. As soon as she received eleven yams she must be packing.[2] She should be taken to her husband any time. The Ifa Oracle would be consulted and the date of "Idana" fixed.

Idana: (The formal betrothal) The notice given for this important ceremony should not be less than nine days. The families on both sides including wives must attend and partake of the drinks and kolanuts brought for the occasion. They thus became witnesses of the betrothal. The boy and the girl would then be formally recognised as future partners. The dowry was paid. Clothes, large calabashes for carrying loads etc. were presented. The occasion was one of rejoicing. The details of this ceremony had fluctuated because as contacts with other places were made, new ways of celebrating betrothal came into force.

Marriage: (Igbeyawo) The Ekiti word for Marriage is "Obutun". The Moslem equivalent is "Yigi". I marry means "Mo m'obutun" or "Mo soyigi". Christians adopt Oyo word "Igbeyawo" and it was used in churches.

Marriage might be solemnized at any time of the year. The convenience of the parties concerned was important. The bride was taken to her husband at night. She was blessed by her parents

2. As from 1916, Divorce was introduced by the British the girl could pack and go to another man. You have to ask for a refund of your expenses which were later on fixed variably. Hence the saying, "Okanlelugba ni oko iyawo oju ona, okan ori re ni oko" (The husbands of an intended wife were two hundred and one, the one is the real husband).

and made to look back three times and then proceed[3]. In normal circumstances, she was accompanied by girls of her age group. They all dressed in their best and danced to melodious music throughout the journey to the new home. At the entrance of the house, the party was received and the feet of the bride were washed and she stepped on a broken calabash to indicate the number of children she should have. From there she was carried into the room prepared for her. In normal circumstances she did not come out of the room for seven days. During this period, everything was done to make her feel at home.

Over the years a girl would do everything possible to make this period a happy one. The period was not happy (*a*) if she had lost her virginity and (*b*) if she was pregnant before marriage.

A married woman was not a member of her husband's family. She was a member of her father's family and took part in her father's worship. In Ekiti unlike Oyo area a woman did not bring the god/idol to her husband's house. She could always go to her father's family for celebration. As a matter of fact, she was called "Eru" (slave) in her husband's family. She took part in the traditional celebration of her husband's family for the sake of her children. If she had no issue, she might not help to prepare food except what her husband would eat.

A woman must mourn the death of her husband for three months if he was a chief and one month if he was just an ordinary man. During the period of mourning, she remained closely indoors. She dressed in ragged clothes and refrained from tasty diet and from taking her bath. After this period, if she was young, she became a wife to one of the relations of the deceased. If she was old, she was assigned to her husband's relation who should look after her. She should be fed and supplied with her minor needs.

Occupation

For years, the main occupation of Ekiti men was farming. Virgin soil was available for agriculture. The shifting cultivation method had undergone very little change in Ekiti-land. Agriculture was carried on with simple and primitive home made implements,

3. This is to show that once, made, she belongs to her husband for life. Divorce was unknown until it was introduced by the British in about 1916.

namely: hoe, cutlass and axe. The principal articles of food grown were yams, kolanuts, maize, beans, pepper, calabashes, gourds, assorted vegetables, tẹtẹ, yanrin, rorowo and cotton. For years, pepper and vegetables were never cultivated. Similarly Uron, oro, Isin were not cultivated. They grew of their own accord, varieties of vegetables were introduced later and grown. Uron in most places however has disappeared.

Women and children were helpful in the farm. They harvested crops and carried them home. No beasts of burden were employed in agricultural operations. Farmers worked from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. with intervals for meals. They normally returned home after the day's work.

Poultry was kept on very small scale. One or two cattle were reared for market. Fruit-trees were rarely cultivated for the supply of markets. Until recently, in Ekiti, fruits were considered free for all. Anybody could enter your farm and pluck pawpaw, oranges etc. It must be what she could eat and not for sale.

But after Kiriji war, many farmers instead of planting yams gradually busy themselves with plantains introduced by the Benins and cocoyams brought in by the Ibadans. Cotton and Cassava followed later.

Since primitive implements were used, productivity was low but the farmers were not aware of it because for years all they needed were meagre, no anxiety for lace or woollen dress.

Lands gradually became the property of this or that family. By 1920, there were scarcely any piece of land that was not legitimately claimed. To obtain land for farming, the request was supported with the supply of a few kegs of palm-wine. This is still the case among farmers. Few of the followers of the Obas were interested in farming. Many of them became juju priests to the numerous gods brought by the Obas. Ekiti Obas had no particular land although, in a general sense, all land belongs to the Oba. Hence the saying, "Oni ke i ja'we ukoko l'Odo, t'owa ni i 'gbo". (The man picking koko leaves at odo is also at the service of the Owa). i.e. They also serve who wait.

Commerce

After the Benin war of 1815, contacts were frequently made with Benin for velvet cloth, gun and gunpowder, and cowries.

After the Kiriji war, Ekiti acted as labourers at Ibadan, Ijebu, Abeokuta and log pullers at Agbabu and used the money thus realised to bring home cutlasses and salt which they sold at home. In this way some of them developed a taste for trade.

They also brought home cocoa seeds to plant. In about 1908, when the rail road was extended to Oshogbo, Ekiti farmers began to carry palm kernel to Oshogbo and as usual returned with cutlasses and salt. Some of them bought cloths and singlets which they sold. The successful ones reared cocoa seedlings while carrying on trade on a small scale. Many Ekitis, particularly from Ekiti North-West, Okemesi and Ido Ajinare, made their way to Gold coast, (Ghana) to mine gold. Some of them learnt photography and tailoring. In this connection Mr. Oladokun of Okemesi-Ekiti was the first photographer in Ekiti. He returned from Gold Coast in 1932 and settled at Ado-Ekiti. He trained numerous photographers.

Mr. John Oladokun Ojo: The rate of progress in Ekiti beclouds History. It is hard to believe that in 1930, apart from the District officer, and Missionaries no one cared for photographs in Ekiti. Celebrations were concerned with food and drinks, no photographs. Twenty years later, almost everything, even school holidays must have photo.

Mr. John Oladokun Ojo, the first photographer in Ekiti began work in Ekiti in 1933. He was the son of Mr. Ojo of Okemesi. He left home in 1914 as a cook to a white man and did the work for seven years, resigned and learnt photography in Oke Okun (Ghana). He began to practise in 1926.

Mr. Oladokun was married and for ten years had no issue. His father, therefore invited him home. He arrived back in 1932, 17th May, and settled at Ado Ekiti in 1933. He experienced a lot of difficulty since very few educated people saw need for photography. Marriage, Burials, Chieftancy celebrations were done without the thought of photographs. Mr. Oladokun was however lucky: his arrival at Ado coincided with Archdeacon Dallimore's activities in Ekiti. He used to tour with the Archdeacon and took photographs at the request of the Archdeacon. Gradually others began to imitate the Archdeacon. John soon began to smile, to have children and have apprentices.

Mr. John Oladokun has trained many successful photographers. Among them were Jonathan, native of Erijiyan, Olatunji Olatoye

and Momodu Balogun. At an advanced age, Mr. Oladokun gave up taking photographs and devoted his attention to selling photographic parts.

Mr. Oladokun laughs long because he laughs last. His presence in Ekiti is a blessing: he has many children and educated them.

Mr. John Noble of Ushi-Ekiti was the first English tailor in Ekiti. He learnt tailoring at Jebba when Jebba bridge was being built. He returned home in 1924 and sewed coats and trousers for teachers and court clerks in Ekiti. He used to line his coats nicely with flannel.

The following type of work was not paying and those engaged in them could not but focus their attention on farming:

1. *Iron Smelting and Smithery:*

Many families practised iron smelting and smithery as evidenced by the Orikis (cognomen) of some of these families such as those of Oloja Ese (Ado-Ekiti) and Oke-Ede (Itaji). These industries have lost their pride of place in Ekiti as the demand for the products have fallen. Of course, no one would want to acquire crude instruments when more refined ones are easily and cheaply available.

2. *Leather Workers:*

Prepared leather, coloured it, (black, red, blue) and produced shoes, slippers, straps for children's belts and medicinal belts. But when Kano leather became available the demand fell. In recent years, many of the trees producing fruits for colouring leathers were destroyed or no longer grown.

3. *Medicine:*

A native doctor was called Onisegun. He was feared by the people. He was consulted every time to help to get rid of an enemy. He administered poisons freely. His counterpart was called Babalawo. He was remarkable for his knowledge of the future through his Ifa Oracle.

4. *Carpenters and Wood Carvers:*

They were very crude in their production which consisted mainly of mortars and coffins. They had only one instrument, '*Osese*' for carving. They also produced handles of knives, and of hoes (Eruko). In most cases the carpenters and carvers were fed, not paid. Carvers, however, were more of a genius than carpenters.

They produced statues of all kinds for worship. Their work was sacred. Sons-in-law or friends or members of your compound helped to build your house and you helped them in turn.

4. *Egungun*

Masqueraders performed from time to time. They got very little except food and drinks. They devoted their spare time to learning incantations and were generally not good farmers. They lived from hand to mouth all their life.

Occupation of Women

They helped on the farm. Majority of Ekiti women accompanied their husbands or fathers to farm to prepare food. At the time of planting yams, corn and other crops they helped. A farmer who had three or four wives was lucky at the time of harvesting crops. His crops would be promptly harvested and sold at the proper time. But if the wives were at loggerheads with one another, the exercise of harvesting crops would be impaired. The first wife was the commanding officer. None of the other wives could make any move without her, although she might be side-tracked when there was a quarrel. The wives shelled palm kernels and helped to produce palm oil. They seeded cotton and spun thread. They wove their children's and husbands' clothes and some of them produced fine *Iketa* and *Ikeji* for markets. Weaving in Ekiti was exclusively the duty of women. The Oyos who later on settled in Ekiti were the first men to engage in weaving. Their method of weaving differed much from that of Ekiti women. Theirs was called "Aso Ofi". The cloth was about six inches wide and could be any length. Ekiti loom was about 18" to 2' wide and seven to nine feet in length. Oyo cloths were light. Ekiti cloths were weaving heavy and were called "Aso Oke" and humorously described as "Iya tani sun le mi", meaning (mother who, rests on me). It is very heavy.

Women dyed threads and cloths. Dyeing was the most lucrative job women engaged in. Hence the saying "A ji moju owo ki i bosi ku". (Those engaged in dyeing never die poor). In addition, women produced other materials—Elu for dyeing, mats, pots and plates. They were the bricklayers of the husband's parlour walls and smoothed the floor.

During the period covered by this book, there were no professional hair dressers in Ekiti. Women helped one another freely.

Oya:

This word means exchange. At about the age of 21, a young man became independent of his father. Although he could still supervise other children in the father's farm, he was exclusively on his own. In order to meet the exigencies of life, he co-operated with men of his calibre age-group. This type of club among farmers was called "Oya". The club was unwidely. The members were five to ten. They went about once a week to work in one another's farm in turn. Feeding was the only thing necessary. They normally worked harder than they would. Following the wake of Oya, "Esusu" was adopted. It was introduced by women. They contributed a number of reels of spun thread and gave them to the members in turn. But when cowry was introduced Esusu in the sense of money contribution was introduced. But Oya continued as there were no labourers. According to Johnson, "Esusu" is a universal custom for the clubbing together of a number of persons for monetary aid. A fixed sum agreed upon is given by each at a fixed time and place under a president. The total amount is paid over to each member in rotation. This enables a poor man to do something worth while where a lump sum is required. There are laws regulating this system." The Esusu collector often ended in debt, because since none of the members could read or write, something was bound to be forgotten. It was also difficult to avoid mistakes which could lead to debt.

Debt.

Among farmers, debt did not necessarily mean owing a certain sum of money. Debt could be incurred in various ways: namely (1) Any one who agrees to clear a plot of ground for so many slices of seedlings and failed to do the work after collecting the seedlings was, according to the time, in debt. (2) Any one who collected unshelled palm-nuts in an area with a promise to give so many kegs of palm oil to the owner of the farm would be in debt on failing to fulfil his promise. An Ekiti was most reluctant to incur debt. He was never ambitious for any extra-ordinary thing. If he committed any public offence, he could defray the expenses without money. The customary expiations for crimes were not money but "Eku meje (seven rats), Eja meje (seven fish) and such annoying things which might lead the culprit to commit suicide.

He prefered death to humiliation—"Iku ya jesin". But at the introduction of divorce, many who seduced wives and had no money began to borrow money to refund the dowry or to pay the court fine. At that material time gun powder began to be sold in Ekiti markets. A hunter could incur debt if he was not careful. A person might borrow money to pay his debt and let his younger brother or sister work for the interest charged on the amount borrowed. The boy or girl was called "Iwọfa". Another way out was to submit oneself to a distrainor Unlike Oyo area, a distrainor in Ekiti was not a person but a group of persons, the Elegbe.

This method of collecting debt was rarely used. However, when it was used, the elegbes got their instruction from the elders of the town/village to collect the debt. The elegbes called the debtor to pay up. He might beg or try to escape. They approached the compound at about 7 p.m. and informed the chief in charge of their intention to collect firewood and make a big fire in an open place in the compound, and collect yams, fowl or goat from the area at the expense of the debtor and roast them and eat till day break. Such grim consequences compelled every man or woman in the compound to contribute money to settle such a debt. No one would allow the elegbes to continue for longer than a night.

There was a milder approach to the problem: The creditor reported the debtors to the Oba of the town/village. He should send 2, or 3 people with his emblem (Opa Akun). The debtor had to do something about the debt. The messengers followed him or her anywhere he went and did all kinds of provocative things to him. They tried to disgrace him publicly. Here again all good people in the area would help to pay off the debt. Anyone who had many daughters would not incur a standing debt, his sons-in-law would clear the debt without delay.

Iwọ̀fà;

Johnson derived Iwọ̀fà from Iwọ (entering), Efa (six-days) "Iwọ̀fà was one who entered into a recurrent sixth day service (see Johnson P. 126-127). That might have been the origin of the term but it was soon exploited.

After the abolition of slavery, some devised a manner of getting cheap labour. They lent out money, generally "Okemarun" i.e. 1,000,000 cowries or (two naira, fifty kobo). The borrower

was charged 5 kobo per day as interest which was very heavy in those days. He was not required to pay in cash. His son, brother or sister should work for the lender for five kobo a day. The borrower paid the interest in cash every time the boy failed to report for duty. As soon as the borrower was able to refund the amount borrowed the boy was free. An iwọfa was different from a slave in many ways: (1) he stayed with his parents and reported for duty every day. He was not expected to be sick. A slave stayed with his master. (2) An iwọfa was treated in a manner worthy of human dignity. A slave did not enjoy such a privilege. (3) A slave could be killed, an iwọfa could not even be flogged. (4) A slave was fed and clothed by his master, an iwọfa might eat his own food and clothe himself. (5) A female slave might be pregnanted by her master, her child remained a slave. If an iwọfa was pregnanted she ceased to be iwọfa and the debt was automatically liquidated. If some one else had spent money on her, the master must refund the money. An iwọfa was expected to make 200 heaps every day. There was no such limit for a slave.

Chapter Three

THE LIFE CIRCLE IN EKITI

1. *Pregnancy*

In a polygamist life, children were primarily the concern of the mothers. The Ekitis carefully looked after their wives during pregnancy. Until about 1929, there was no hospital, not even a clinic. During pregnancy, the woman's salvation and that of the child depended on special herbalists to whose care she was confined.

Wherever morality was low, the death rate during pregnancy was always high, since a pregnant woman might be confined to the care of two or three herbalist and she was likely to be over-dosed. In normal cases, the herbalist usually had a woman consultant who would take the delivery of the child when the time came.

In general, during pregnancy, a woman was expected to work hard. It was taboo for her to feel delicate. She was forbidden to move around in the afternoon between 12 noon and 4 p.m. She drew her drinking water very early in the morning or late in the afternoon, never at midday. She should not subject herself to sudden causes of fear.

2. *Birth*

The treatment of the mother after child birth varied from place to place. In general, a woman who gave birth to living child must observe the food taboo of her husband's family for seven days if the child was a girl and nine days if a boy. The food taboo might consist of not taking salt or palm oil or of not eating certain vegetables.

A male child brought greater joy to the family than a female child and the mother of a male child was more encouraged than that of a female child. The male child was needed in the farm, the female child was often confined to the kitchen.

Twins and Triplets:

Although Ekitis were anxious for children, until recently, they never welcomed twins and they dreaded triplets. Unlike the practice in Calabar area, they never ostrascized the mother of twins or triplets. They nevertheless kept the delivery very secret. The only way of knowing was the name given to the child that followed the twins—"IDOWU". The identity of a mother of triplets was kept secret. Delivery of triplets was considered a bad omen. The expression for triplets was "Eta-Oko" (three things thrown away). Perhaps the idea was that the Maker having rejected the triplets pushed them on to the world in such a group, and the husband of the woman had to reject the gift as being too uncommon and might bring a misfortune. Today they are delivered safely in hospitals and maternities.

Children born deformed had no chance of living. Stories of women giving birth to goats, stags and lumps of flesh (sigidi) were common. They were to be understood in the sense of the deformed. If a child was born blind, or with one eye or ear or abnormal head it would not be welcome. Farmers could only cater for those physically fit to work, not for liabilities. If a person became lame at ten or twenty, nothing could be done about it but if he was lame from birth, he had no chance of survival. Until recently, a male albino (afin) was also unwelcome; if however he survived the crisis at birth, he would probably die young as a result of isolation.

3. *Naming:*

A living child was ceremoniously named on the seventh or ninth day. On that day, the mother of the child appeared in her best flanked on all sides by the members of her husband's family and of her own.

The child was given a name amid feasting. If the child had a natural name like; OKE, AKUTA, DADA, IDOWU etc. the natural name will be confirmed. Other names might be added.

4. *"Imo Omo":*

After the arrival of the Obas, a new ceremony called "Imo Omo" (knowing the child) was added. Three months after the

birth of a living child, a day was booked with the priest in charge of "knowing a child". He was known as "ALAMEKU". The parents took the child to him with Egbejilaa (about seven kobo) if they were poor or egberin-lelogun (twelve kobo) if they were rich. The Alameku consulted Ifa Oracle as to which grand-father or mother was re-incarnated in the particular child. He informed the parents of the result of the consultation. The parents had to offer the priest whatever was prescribed and they took care of the child according to the Alameku's revelations.[1] The right arm of a male child or the left arm of a female was marked with three strokes of chalk on leaving the Alameku's premises. Hence the saying "Ifa Ameku, omo olorehude".[2]

In Ekiti, most Alamekus were no specialists of Ifa Oracle. The date being fixed, the Alameku might invite an Ifa Oracle specialist to ensure accurate and efficient interpretation.

5. *Circumcision:*

Circumcision was always done at the discretion of the mother of the child. Some careless mothers might leave the operation late. Circumcision of a boy or girl at fifteen was considered bad. If it failed to heal in time, the child was ruined for life. There were cases of such carelessness and the child became a liability.

In Ekiti, circumcision was taken seriously. No girl will marry a boy who was not circumcised and girls who were not circumcised were believed likely to have still born babies. During the time of slavery, slaves were always circumcised but while the children of free born were circumcised within seven days of birth, those of slaves were allowed to grow up to ten or fifteen years or more before being curcumcised. Children circumcised late normally became very bitter.

Certain men and women were responsible for circumcision. They were called "Ologun" (the owner of knives). They believed that they were born not made. They maintained that any man or woman who tried to make himself or herself a circumciser would encounter difficulties, the wound might not heal and thus he or she might paralyse the organs of the circumcised.

1. The three months is reckoned from the day after Ogun festival.
2. This is a description of the colour of the chalk suggesting that the manner of the Ifa of Alameku was like brass.

The *Ologun* had a code of conduct which they must strictly adhere to. If a man, he must keep away from a woman (his own wife included) for the period allocated for circumcision, usually a fortnight. A woman Ologun must not cohabit during the period. It was believed that the wound might not heal if that code of conduct was violated.

The date the Ologun would come round was always announced. He or she would cover an area and collect his/her pay consisting of a few yams and kolanuts[1]. The fixing of the date was necessary for preparing the sterilizing juice and the medicine for washing the wound which was expected to heal within three to four days. It was most inconvenient for the Ologun if the wound were not healed in time.

6. *Facial Marks*:

Ekitis originally had no facial marks but when kidnapping became rampant, mothers marked the faces of their children as they liked. Some marked one line on each cheek, like the Ondos but not as pronounced; others, three or four perpendicular lines closely drawn. As soon as kidnapping was over, the practice was discontinued.

7. *Body Adornments*:

This was done in two ways: (a) with "Ina"[2] and with "Ara bibu" (incisions). The juice of some trees was like black kandahar but washable. The juice was called "Ina". It was used to print on the body certain figures. The other type is called "Ara bibu". It was done by making numberless incisions with needle or knife on the body. It was permanent. Boys and girls were fond of these incisions. They adorned their bodies with all kinds of figures of their choice. But while boys decorated mostly their arms, girls had figures of snake and lizard printed on their backs, chests and legs. Hence the saying: "Awe mi, mu 'waju ori b'oka, O m'eyin b'ere, o mari isiju omode bu gbalaja utan" (My friend decorated her forehead and the back with the figures or a snake, and had other decorations around her thighs).

1. Today the Ologuns are still active: they take money instead of yams.
2. Ina—liquid from cantharides. The tree was common in Ekiti at one time.

MR JOHN NOBLE

First tailor in Ekiti, learnt at Jebba and came home in 1924

TWINS ARE NO LONGER DESTROYED

8. *Infancy To Adolescence:*

From the age of one to six, children were generally left to the care of their mothers. If a child lost its mother before the age of three the hope that it would live was very little. As from three, a grand-mother might be able to look after it. The knowledge of children's food was very poor.

As from five, the child could be carried by the father to farm and it might eat pounded yam, beans, and so on. Scarcely was there any child of that age, who did not succeed in setting its father's farm hut on fire. The child gradually helped in the farm to fetch water and to collect fire-wood. At home, he could weed the front of the house of his father and run messages.

At the age of nine, in some places he entered services of his town village. He helped to clean the streets at the approach of a festival. He loved festivals and would wish them never to be over. From now, he participated in age-grade activities.

From the age of nine to twenty or more, parent's as a rule, preferred to pass the education of their children to relations. Your brother, sister or cousins look after your children and you take care of theirs. In this way pampering was avoided. Some parents often pretend to have borrowed some money from a friend and thus gave one or two of their children to work for the interest of the money.

A child must live under the same roof as his father or caretaker. The main activity of the adult was to go to farm every day and finish the portion allotted to him. Farmers had a code of conduct from which no one was allowed to deviate. An adult had to make or clear 200 heaps every day, he could do more but not less.

Under a tutor, the adult learned, what, when and how to plant various seeds, seedlings and crops. A farmer's life was really monotonous but hard work removed or minimized the monotony. None enjoyed better and healthier food than farmers. Everything was taken fresh. Ko si'yan to dun bi iyan a gboko je.

Ko s'eyele, ko s'adiye
T'a yi ni lomi obe danu.

(There is no pounded yam like the one in the farm, where there is no pigeon or fowl to over turn the soup pot).

Home Training: Every child was carefully instructed by his or her parents. "A bi i ko" was one of the highest disgrace heaped on a family whose children failed to behave properly. Ekitis had a code

of conduct which though not written was carefully handed to generations.

Apart from moral instructions given by parents or guardians to their children or protege, there were teachers of Incantations and of Ifa-Oracle.

As from the age of 20, a boy must begin to learn a few *incantations* (Ofo) of some cults especially Egungun, and *Ereju/Ebora/Oro*. The cleverer you were in this connection, the more confidently you took your place in public.

In almost every town you had teachers of Incantations or Ifa-Oracle. Oba Orunkinle at Iworoko had a good number of students 5–10 for Incantation. He was not paid for his teaching but the students must bring a keg of palm wine to the school in turn. The school was at night in a dark court yard. No one was allowed to the school unless those enrolled. Mr. Orunkinle died about 1945. By that time the idea of incantation was loosing ground in central towns.

Ifa teachers were generally Oyos. One, Mr. Fatoki was a student under his own father. He was very clever and very versed in the art. For many years, he was depended upon in many villages to interpret the oracle's mind. He died about 1940. Many students of Ifa Oracle are still found in Ekiti but Christianity is reducing their influence.

9. *Communications.*

Before the introduction of British Rule, there were no motor roads, no cars, not even bicycles. There were no carmels, mules or horses, towns and villages were connected by means of bush paths often obstructed with fallen trees. Rivers were bridged, but the bridges easily succumbed to currents during rainy season. There were no post offices or postal agencies. Messages were sent by means of symbols called "Aroko". Cowries in particular were used. Two cowries tied facing each other and sent to a person meant "I want to see you". Three cowries meant "I cast you off". This was why three things are not given as a gift. Four cowries meant "My first instalment". Five cowries were a token of friendship. This was the most popular form of messages. Any number of cowries tied plus charcoal and sent to a person was always a definite sign of hatred or at least a challenge. The message meant "May you be destroyed as wood is destroyed by fire". The receiver had one of three things to do, namely:

(*a*) to send rich presents back as a sign of submission; or
(*b*) to take the challenge; or
(*c*) to commit suicide which was deemed honourable.

If charcoal, camwood and ashed were sent to someone, the message meant a terrible curse. Charcoal meant that an evil would befall him, camwood, that he would swim in his own blood and ashes that he would be reduced to dust and ashes. It was also a serious challenge to pass a leaf between your thights and place it on your neighbours' head or to point a finger to his face.

Until the advent of Christianity, bell ringing was unknown. In case of accident, war or fire, one of the following methods of calling people together or raising an alarm was usually employed:

(*a*) *Pagege:* This was a hollow piece of iron, conical in shape. The sound could be heard miles away. It is still in use generally during Egungun festivals.

(*b*) *Bembe:* A kind of drum used at all times. It is often beaten in villages to call the villagers to do town work.

(*c*) *Apoporo:* A hollow piece of wood, canoe shaped, it was struck with a pestle and could be heard miles off. It was generally used for the festival of Epa. If sounded outside that period, it was always a sign of danger. It was the most common signal during the tribal war.

Every group had its own way of summoning meetings for instance, hunters used special drums. The Oba might use the Pagege, that is town crier, or send the Omode-Owas (Oba's messengers) round. The Bales did the same thing.

Hunters had the licence of taking food from any farm but they must tie a know made with a rag known as *eninu* at a conspicuous point in the farm. *Eninu* was to tell the owner that a hunter had been there.

Fruits were generally left on the road side for sale, a certain leaf called "Imu" was tied beside it in order to warn thieves away from stealing the fruits. It was believed that any thief touching such a thing would be caught as indicated by the name of the leaf. A number of cowries or later on, a half penny was suspended over the fruit to indicate the unit price. If a keg of palm wine was left by the roadside with "Imu" leaves at the mouth of the keg, it was an indication that the palm wine was going to be used by some baba-lawos (medicine-men). If on the other hand a fresh palm leaf was

tied around the neck of the keg it was a sign that the palm wine belonged to an Oba. In both cases it was most risky to touch such a palm wine.

10. *Marriage:*

A male child was expected to serve his father or guadian until he was eighteen or twenty. In return, his father was responsible for providing the first wife, and his mother for the second, if the family was well-to-do, and he could secure the third for himself.

The most popular prayer was to have many wives. The first wife was the land-lady "Iya'le" (mother of the family). She occupied a place of eminence in the family: If there was any sharp disagreement between her husband and his father, the consequences were always on her. She must do all she could to prevent this. The second wife was the gift of his mother. There was no danger of disagreement between the son and the mother. The third was his own darling. It was easy to proceed from the third to any number, depending on the man's means. Wealth was reckoned in terms of the number of wives. He who was expected to be Baale or Oba, must work hard to have many wives.

Death: Except the *abiku* and *emere*, ordinarily a person was expected to live long. Old age was reckoned from fifty. Until recently, anyone who died before fifty was said to die young and was never mourned or mourned only secretly.

The proper age to die was any time above fifty for which there was mourning. Tears were believed to be provisions for the journey to the other world. Those who died at the proper age deserved much provisions. Like the tears the grave was an honour to the dead. It was dug deep about eight feet, generally in the parlour of the deceased and curved at the bottom to make a small cell where the body was laid. The use of coffins was not common, only the rich could afford the expenses. Not only the body but all kinds of clothes, and money and precious materials were buried with the dead. Three important dates were marked, *Ita*, (third day), *Ije* (seventh day) and a year after the burial. During the first seven days of the burial, a woman is detailed to keep watch over the grave. She kept a torch burning throughout the night. She must be fed with meat and decent food throughout the period

Life and death:

(*a*) It was believed that after death, the soul ordinarily went to one of three places. The first was heaven which was considered a place of rest (Ibi Isimi). There, husband and wife and children reassembled to continue their life after death. It was usual for the father of a bad son to pray against meeting him in the next world. The second was *Orun Esisan* a place of suffering like the hell of the Christians. The third was *Ugogo-igi*, a shelterless place where the dead were still exposed to the inclemency of the weather even though they rested. It was believed to be the abode of those who lived and died poor. Poverty was considered a misfortune to be fought against during one's life time.

Abiku and Emere: Ekiti believed that some children were too lazy and were afraid to live and so they died within a short time after their birth. They were *Abiku*. And since they failed to fulfil the will of the creator, they were refused entry to heaven by the creator. They formed a special society and lived in a forest near towns and villages as *emere*. This idea could have arisen from the fact that this type of children (*Abiku*) were never buried but thrown into the bush.

Abiku group was said to be cruel and moved about the forest at mid-day. They could entice the child in the womb to join the group. Such a child would die as soon as it was born. (i.e. within three years)

The souls of certain types of cruel people were also said to be rejected by the creator. Such souls entered into the body of a particular bird and sang their regrets for ever. The soul of a cruel man too was beleived to enter the body of a wild beast hence: the verse; "Akogun ku, O do'loko, Ibafon ku, O dakariko" (An Akogun died and became a tiger, an Ibafon became a wolf)[1].

Ekiti believed that the souls of the good went straight to heaven. The usual and traditional expression at burials illustrate this belief: "Se ni ko burin burin ko o duro b'omi ago. Ma j'okun, ma j'ekolo, Un k'an ba i je li be ni ko o ba-an a je" (Trek and trek and rest like water in a basin. Do not eat earthworm, eat whatever others eat yonder).

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1. This is an allusion to the action of some famous men or important chiefs who appeared at night in a tiger or wolf's skin to kill goats and sheep for their family meals. This was common after Kiriji war. But when hunters began to use a double barrelled guns, that method of stealing goats and sheep had to stop.

Chapter Four

RELIGION

The aboriginal inhabitants of Ekiti were farmers. They lived close to nature. They believed in the existence of supreme God who did not need anything except acknowledgement of His supremacy. It seemed the first object of worship among them, was the god of fate, "IPIN". It was logical. One farmer discovered that the farm of his neighbour was better than his own, though they cultivated in the same locality, and so he felt that he should propitiate his own fortune. He offered cold water and kolanut to his own head. He has it in his language, that the head is the support of one's life, "Ori eni ni ngbe ni". If a person was unlucky, his head was blamed "olori buruku". Even the lazy man blamed his head for being lazy. The father and mother of the family, offered kolanut and cold water on their heads, the god of fate. A young man wishing to make progress prayed thus: "My head, I have a word for you. Be rich in time lest you become the servant of the rich". (Ori mi, mo l'oro lati ba o so: O ba tete la, ki olola ma pe o ran ni ise). The worship continues till today.

In some places, children were given a fowl each every year at the Ogun festival to propitiate the god of fate, the cock was killed, some of the feathers were plastered on the fore-head with the blood of the fowl. The child being the owner of the cock must eat the head.

Another object of worship was the god of tools, (including guns and traps) with which the land was cultivated. The tools were propitiated once a year. In case of lack of rain, all tools were gathered together and worshipped, and begged to bring down rain. If any one was believed to be responsible for the lack of rain the tools were urged to kill or injure the culprit whenever they were used by him.

When later on most of the tools were made of iron, the god of iron—"Ogun" held a pride of place among the farmers and hunters in Ekiti. The feast of Ogun is universal in Ekiti "T'eru t'omo ni nsogun" (Both the slave and the free celebrate the festival of Ogun).

ırd object of worship was "Emilale" the spirit of the ich was cultivated and which produced food. The farmer t drink palm wine without libation or eat pounded yam offering the first morsel to the ground. The Ekitis knew about "ORISA OKO". Even the Atoyobos do not give to Orisa Oko. One reason must be that the mind of the naturally rebelled against anything Oyo".

t from the religious commitments referred to above, the nal inhabitants of Ekiti, seemed to have no time for anything When the second batch—the Obas and their followers—d, various objects of worship were introduced. The Ewi was ed to have been accompanied with Egungun, and the Elekole different kinds of deities. Hence the saying: "Abarisa, uwo ni igun k'Ado k'Omisango k'Ibadan, k'Omu 'Runmolek'Egbe " (God you initiated the Egigun at Ado, Sango in Ibadan a conglomeration of gods in Egbe Oba.

rom that time on various objects of worship were introduced Ekiti and were headed particularly by those who had a version for lasses and hoes. There was human sacrifice since the period of the as. The victims were mainly slaves, male and female. The victims ust not have a blemish. If a woman, she must not be pregnant. ence the saying: "Oni ko maboyun sebo ni pari eio" The most ominable thing is to offer a pregnant woman in sacrifice.[1] Since ne time of Ibadan war, greater opportunity was open to loafers articularly from Ife, to settle among the farmers. They introduced fa Oracle, the worship of different kinds of trees, rivers hills etc. Sango was peculiar to Ibadan and was not welcome in Ekiti. It was actively resisted by the British as you will see in chapter XII of this book.

Those parts of Ekiti that were closer to Ife had some cults that were strictly secret e.g. the worship of Omoluorogbo at Igede and Ara; Ereju/Oro/Ebora appeared to have been introduced from Ijebu or Abeokuta or Ila-Oragun. The people of Otun got their own type of Egungun from the Oyos/Ilorins.

The worship of hills e.g. Olosunta, rivers e.g. Ogbese came into being later on. Some of the ideas arose from circumstances inspired by fears and dreams wrongly interpreted by juju priests.

1. Human sacrifice was stopped in Ekiti not by law but by necessity and reverses of fortune. At Are, for example, the Aworo was killed by the victim, at Eyio, the Aworo was killed by the victim. Iyapa was the last place.

In traditional religion, god never prescribed the use
Originally there was no money, cowry was not yet i
priests prescribed "Eku meje, Eja meje, Igbin, Ewe Odu
The gods never prescribed bush meat.[1] Domestic anima
public sacrifice were never bought. As a rule, they we
in the street. Certain social groups were free to seize a
their unchallenged use. This was because the groups pl
portant roles in the provision of materials for sacrific
the saying: "Eran mokun wole, eran Ijogun; Aguntan
wole Aguntan Egiri". (If a goat or a sheep dragged
with which it was tied, the goat or the sheep would be s
Ijogun or Egiri societies). Dogs which mated in the stre
killed during the act. It was believed to be a bad omen.
which laid eggs in the centre of a compound was killed
diately being a bad omen and ditto for a cock which cre
sun set and before dawn, around 4.00 a.m.

1. The gods never prescribed bush meat (except Eyemote who prescribed
Edu). Hence the saying- "Ẹran ile ni Ifa gba yẹkẹtẹ mọ".

Chapter Five

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

t first there were few families in Ekiti. They lived in scattered lements surrounded by their farms and hunting grounds. The ily head called "Báalé"[1] (Baba ilé) (Father of the household) s virtually everything to his people. He led his house in religion d settled their differences. As the family grew larger, the leader- ip of the family became a bone of contention. Then the next gher grade of leadership emerged. He was called Báalẹ or Oba— Baba ilẹ, i.e. Father of the land). He was the court of appeal. The Báalẹ settled his children's quarrels with other people and if no satisfaction, an appeal could be made to the Báalẹ who, at the head of the several families, would see that justice was done. Báalẹ's words were final. To disobey him was risky to one's course. He took no bribe. If a case was really serious, a keg of palm wime would be given to speed it up but not to extort or pervert justice.

In criminal cases, the offended party could do whatever he liked with the offender; but if the offender was stronger than the offended, the case may be referred to the village head who in consultation with the elderly people of the village would look into the matter. But whatever happened. "Might was almost always right." The rationalisation is illustrated by the statement, "Ọni ba ju ni, ni mọ ọ ọni igba ni leti" (A superior person uses the weaker persons hand to slap his face).

In some cases, certain families served as places of refuge. The offender could run to such places to avoid being punished. If in a criminal case, the culprit was found guilty, he was handed over to the hunters who for many years protected their settlements and reported strange phenomena to the elders of the settlement. Later

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Note: Town heads were not called "Baale" until after Ibadan war. A town head was usually called the name of his settlement and vice versa. He may however be given a specific title e. g. Ijafin (Town) Arinjafin (Baale: Afao (Town): Odofin (Baale: Igbemo (Town), Oba (Baale: Oba (Town) Oloba (Baale), Iworoko (Town), Aoroko (Baale: Uyin (Town), Oluyin (Baale); Are (Town) Alare (Baale).

on, the Elegbes took the place of hunters, and were charged with punishing offenders.

In course of time, the settlements formed larger units and the government took a dramatic change. The society was organised for working on the farm of the head chief of the village and clearing of paths leading to the village. All these led to re-grouping and re-organisation. The best grouping was by age. At about the age of nine years a person entered the services of his village.

The group organization was named differently in different places, but the duties were broadly the same. Among other things, members of the group cleaned the streets during festivals. After serving for nine years the group was promoted to the second stage. The members cleared paths leading to villages or neighbouring markets, excluding paths leading to farms which were the concern of the owners of the farms. The third group began at twenty-seven years. This group supplied old men with logs of wood for warming their rooms.

The fourth group, at thirty-six, was a more formal organization. The members of this group assumed the role of Elegbe (soldiers). They must be prepared to defend the village if hunters reported the possibility of invasion. The group was also responsible for punishing public offenders—thieves, witches and wizard and for collecting chronic debts. The next group began at forty-five at which stage a person became an elder (agba ilu) or was confined to his former group for life.

The duties of the elders (agba ilu) included settling quarrels arising from boundary disputes, civil and criminal cases, with crafts etc.[1]

An interesting account of the age group at Ikere was given by the late Oba Adegoriola I, the Ogoga of Ikere as follows:-

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1. *Note:* Oath-taking was concomitant with age group association. The Elegbes were particularly concerned, every person took an oath that he would keep the secrecy of his group. To break the oath was called "Ilędida". It was considered a serious offence. In case of Oro/Ębora cult, oath taking was essential for a group called "Ioro". Even in the initiation called "Obutun eo", an oath was also taken not to divulge any secrets.

Some wives of Obas also took oath which was renewed every year like that of the Elegbes. But their oath had nothing to do with secrecy. They were expected not to commit adultery. If they did they h[illegible]

"Of the three principal quarters that from Ikere proper, each possesses its own age-grades known as"-

(*i*) Egbe Majaiyera from 16 years to 20 years.
(*ii*) Egbe Mojuara from 20 years to 24 years.
(*iii*) Egbe Monimusu from 24 years to 28 years.
(*iv*) Egbe Monigbao from 28 years to 32 years.
(*v*) Egbe Ibedo from 32 years to 36 years.
(*vi*) Egbe Egiri from 36 years to 40 years.
(*vii*) Egbe Agbakin from 40 years to 44 years.
(*viii*) Egbe Osaka from 44 years to 48 years.

When the youths reached the age of 16, they performed the ritual called "Irubo" (Sacrifice). Each of them was to slaughter at least a goat for the ritual. After the feast they danced with music round the town. The purpose was to express gratitude to God that they lived to enter the age-grades.

The next age-grade celebration was "Arapon" which was observed before the youth entered into Ibedo age-grade. This celebration was more elaborate than the previous one for it lasted three months. In this celebration each man was to slaughter from ten to twelve pigs; it costs a man from ₦70.00 to ₦100 to observe this joyful stage in life when he regarded himself as fully fledged, capable of becoming a title-holder and consequently a town councillor. Any man who did not have a wife before reaching this age-grade was regarded as lazy.

Each of the eight age-grades had a President and a Vice-President called respectively "Olori-Egbe" and "Atele". These officers were elected at the end of every four years by the next senior age-grade. All the eight age-grades changed from one age-grade into another in the same year and there used to be a continuous festive mood from July to December, when Ikere was worth visiting. The celebration was made particularly grand by both men and women in the second to the last age-grade who were about to enter into the last age-grade (Osaka). They had to keep vigil on the eve of the handing-over day celebration, singing, beating their special drums, and dancing throughout the night until day-break. It used to be an occasion of ecstasy which many other townspeople keep vigil along with the age-grade celebrants."[1]

The Ogoga has given us an interesting account of age-groups and promotions at Ikere. It must not be concluded that every town in Ekiti followed the same pattern. One important thing so far has been left out; the elders, Agba Ilu, when houses were thatched with grass, in most places they used to appoint themselves two by two, to stay in the central places where they could easily give signals should fire break out anywhere in the town. Generally they should get the women to bring water to quench the fire and should notify those in the farm to come to the aid of the women. That they did by beating a drum and using other signals immediately available.

Part II

Chapter Six

THE COMING OF THE OLOJA/OWA

Ekiti village and town heads were called Oloja and Owa respectively. A town head (Owa) claimed to be descendant of Odudua for a "King" to distinguish the relatively numerous kings of this part of the world from the British monarch. At Ado, the term "Oba" is the family designation of the male children of the Ewi and others. The females are called "Oja" except at Igbemo where "Oja" is used for both male and female. Hence the expression used for a family at Igbemo: "A re o r'Oja, mo re o r'Oba" (There is money to buy an Oja but there is no money to buy an Oba) (2) The term "Baale" was introduced by Ibadan and was used by the British for district heads who normally prefered to be known as "Oba". They saw a lowering of status in the term Baale.

It was not to be imagined that the Obas arrived in Ekiti in a group. They came in one by one. The coming covered a long period of time. To fix 15th Century for their coming meant that their coming covered a period of about one hundred years or more. At one stage of Ekiti development, a beaded Crown was so invaluable as to engage the attention of those who were anxious for it. To retain it later on, the wearer had to prove that he was a descendant of Odudua, that he came from Ife and that he was invited to govern. Who could have removed a crown from Aduloju's head or Olugbosu of Ilupeju Ekiti, if they had the ambition.

The original Ekiti sixteen Olojas are no longer known. There was no record of their composition and historians were not in agreement on this.

1. *Ekiti Obas*

Many historians maintain that after the death of Odudua; his children scatered all over the country. Those of them who came to Ekiti whether directly from Ife or indirectly from other places asserted themselves over the aboriginal inhabitants of Ekiti as

Olojas.[1] They wore Crowns similar to what they saw in Ife. They were not good farmers. But they had plenty of ambition and were greedy for power. They were sophisticated and easily absorbed the inhabitants especially those in the central places. They got the people to build their Palaces and established kingdoms.

The Sixteen Ekiti kingdoms occupy an area of 2,100 square miles in the north-eastern corner of Yoruba country. Each Ekiti kingdom was quite independent of the others, and there was no time when the Ekiti acknowledged a common ruler. An attempt by the British Government to create an Ekiti paramount chief was foiled by gain seekers.

All Ekiti Obas except the Oore claimed to be descendants of Odudua "Olofin". The Oore traced his descent to the sea-god "Olokun". He claimed to have met Odudua at the shore and cured him of his blindness. He gave water to the sons of Odudua. Hence he was called "Oloore" contracted to Oore. (Benefactor).

The Obas (Olojas) displaced the aboriginal Ekiti rulers, in most cases by force of arms carried out strategically and by means of further conquests established themselves firmly on the throne.[1] Some having settled peacefully began to control the weaker neighbours and gradually extended their protection over them and displaced their former rulers.[2] Others simply aided the enemies against the weaker towns and settlements and weakened them to the extent of annexation without further difficulty.[3] A classic example of this was Aaye which was subdued by Oore through the aid of Ibadan and Ilorin.

When each Oba had settled down, he set up his own government without interfering with the government of the aboriginal inhabitants. At Ado the Ewi has his Olori Marun (the five head chiefs) through whom he governed all his subjects. Until 1931, the Ewi had no direct contact with the district Olojas. The Olojas contacted the Olori Marun. Each Olori represented a number of towns under the Ewi. The towns were contacted and directed and their homage received through the Olori Marun. Since there was no immediate contact between the Ewi and his subjects including

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1. Johnson did not mention any of the Ekiti Obas as being one of the sons or grandsons of Odudua. This is not surprising at the material time Ekiti was looked upon as a vassal of Oyo.
2. 1x2x3 Dr. J. S. A. Akintoye pp. 10—11

some chiefs he was not hated. Every misdirection was attributed to the Olori Marun.[1]

Moreover, the Ewi extended his authority over his subtowns by gradually displacing the original Olojas with his own children. Tradition mentioned Gberubioya the 9th Ewi as being particularly responsible for initiating the method. The children however on becoming the Oloja of those towns or settlements did not change the constitution. The Ajero and the Oore and in fact all the other Ekiti Obas had similar relationships with their subjects.

(*b*) *The Second Grade or Minor Olojas*

After the Obas had settled and had consolidated their position, others came to Ekiti claiming to be Olojas. They succeeded in getting a second place to the Obas. They became Minor Olojas. After the Ibadan wars, the minor Olojas were described as Baales.

The minor Olojas are of four kinds:

(1) Those who could easily claim to be major Olojas but being reduced by wars took refuge under a stronger Oloja and were satisfied with being minor Olojas e.g. The Ologotun at Ikere-Ekiti.

(2) Those who were Olojas in their own right but migrated to a new place and settled under a powerful Oloja e.g. the Odofin/Okofin of Odo Ado, Ado-Ekiti.

(3) Those who accompanied the Obas and were honoured by being appointed lord over Villages which later on developed into big towns e.g. the Oluyin's settlement, joined with about sixteen other settlements. The sixteen settlements later on closed ranks and became four and finally one Uyin, now Iyin.

(4) Those who kept to the lucrative side of life and were Obas at the shrines. The Olukere of Ikere is a classic example. However he can prove that he is from Ife, that he is Oloja and that he was invited to govern.

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1 A short History of Ado Ekiti p. 12, 1953.

2. *Palace:*

This was the official residence of an Ekiti Oba. It was major or minor depending on the status of the Oba. It was always situated in a central high ground of the original town where the Oloja could easily look down on any part of the town and his privacy was safeguarded. Moreover, further safeguard was maintained by not allowing any private building near it.

"All roads led to the palace, for it contained, among other things the town's assembly hall, Court of justice, theatre and sports ground".

The palaces in Ekiti were the same in form but not in size and mostly in ruin today. The first common feature was with forest behind the palace of the major Olojas surrounded by the walls called "Gbagede". The erection and maintenance of the Gbagede were the responsibility of the district Olojas. The Gbagede is now all gone for want of repairs and part of it has been pulled down and the land used for offices, firms, shops, garage, court-halls etc. Moreover school education and necessity of life disrupted society and removed the control the Obas and the district Olojas had over their people.

Another common feature was the market right in the front of the palace; hence the name "Oloja" (owner of market). The Oba's Palace was always in the centre of his town. Today, as the town extends in all directions, it is still in the centre. But if the town extends to one direction more than to the other, the palace may lose its central position. The Ewi's Palace is still unique in many respects. The features of the palace have been graphically illustrated by Afolabi Ojo[1].

An Ekiti Oba was always the wealthiest person but not the richest in the realm. Hence the saying "A ki i ka Oloja we eniti o la" (When you enumerate the rich, count the Oloja out). His palace was maintained by all the people in his domain. "The Oba held all the land of his domain on behalf of the community and was therefore the Lord of the estate"[2]. The Oloja might be penniless, yet his house was more furnished than that of a rich man, his wives were more numerous, he could raise more money within

1. Prof. Afolabi Ojo; Yoruba Palaces, page 42
2. idem p. 22

LIST OF EKITI KINGDOM GIVEN BY VARIOUS AUTHORS:

	(A) GOVERNMENT SERVICE LIST 1909	(B) REV. S. A. JOHNSON 1st PUBLICATION 1921	(C) DR. S.A. AKIN AKINTOYE 1st PUBLICATION 1971	(D) MSGR. A. OGUNTUYI'S ENUMERATION HAS
	KINGDOM THE OBA	*KINGDOM THE OBA*	*KINGDOM THE OBA*	*KINGDOM THE OBA*
1.	Ado under Ewi	Otun under Owore	Otun under Oore	Ado under Ewi
2.	Ijero ,, Ajero	Ijero ,, Ajero	Ikole ,, Elekole	Ijero ,, Ajero
3.	Ikere ,, Ogoga	Ado ,, Ewi	Ado ,, Ewi	Ikole ,, Elekole
4.	Ido ,, Olojido	Ikole ,, Elekole	Oye ,, Oloye	Otun ,, Oore
5.	Effon ,, Alaaye	Ara ,, Alara	Ijero ,, Ajero	Akure ,, Deji
6.	Ise ,, Arinjale	Efon ,, Alaaye	Ido ,, Olojido	Ara ,, Alara
7.	Okemesi ,, Olojaoke	Akure ,, Ajapada	Ikere ,, Ogoga	Ido ,, Olojido
8.	Ara ,, Alara	Ogotun ,, Alagotun	Akure ,, Deji	Ikere ,, Ogoga
9.	Oye ,, Oloye	Ido ,, Olojido	Ise ,, Arinjale	Oye ,, Oloye
10.	Ogotun ,, Ologotun	Ayede ,, Ata	Emure ,, Elemure	Ise ,, Arinjale
11.	Ayede ,, Ata	Imesi ,, Oloja	Efon ,, Alaaye	Emure ,, Elemure
12.	Itaji ,, Onitaji	Oye ,, Oloye	Imesi ,, Olojaoke	Efon ,, Alaaye
13.	Isan ,, Onisan	Omuo ,, Olomuo	Ara ,, Alara	Itaji ,, Onitaji
14.		Ire ,, Onire	Isan ,, Onisan	Okemesi ,, Olojaoke
15.		Ise ,, Arinjale	Itaji ,, Onitaji	Isan ,, Onisan
16.		Itaji ,, Onitaji	Obo ,, Olobo	Ogotun ,, Ologotun
17.			Ogotun ,, Ologotun	Ire under the Onire

Ekiti tradition recognised sixteen kingdoms although different numbers were given later, some less, others more, as you see above. If authors had agreed, there would have been twenty kingdoms setting aside the tradition.

a short time without the intention of paying back. Those fine things in his house might have been donated to him, while the rich man usually bought similar things. It was customary for the Oba to take away from any person's house anything he wanted including good plates, cushion—carpets and horse's tail. An Ekiti Oba could not confiscate property. It was the duty of the Elegbes to confiscate. He could engineer confiscation and have a lion share of it.

Notes on Each Author:

(*A*) The Southern Nigeria Civil Service List and Hand Book, 1909, had Thirteen Kingdoms instead of the traditional sixteen. It omitted Ikole, Emure, Otun, Ire, and Akure.

All these chiefs traced their descent from the centre of the Yoruba world. They, like the Ijesha took up tracts of land and eventually were crowned by their "Archbishop", the Oni of Ife. After numerous small wars among themselves they join forces as a protection against their common enemies, the Ibadans and Ilorins and formed the present confederation". —C.N.S. List 1909.

"*Number:* At one stage the Governor, Sir Samuel Rowe's memo File 21, page 11, of the Gold Coast now Ghana, wrote that there were 132 petty Obas in Ekiti and that the Owa of Ilesha was the Supreme Head of them. Although this looked like a Coffee party talk, it is at least a sign that the Owa of Ilesha was at one time one of the sixteen Ekiti Obas, as the Ajero held. It was said that the Owa of Ilesha invited the British Government to send a "God—fearing man" to help to wield the country together under the Owa of Ilesha. Capt. W. R. Reeve Tucker in 1899 was sent to Oke Imo Ilesha but he did not comply with the wishes of the Owa. Compare the Divisional centralisation of Ilesha and Ekiti by O. Oged Macaulay, 1944."

(*B*) *Revd. Johnson's List:*

Johnson left out the Ogoga of Ikere, the Elemure of Emure, the Onisan of Ishan. The omission might be due to the fact that some Obas did not answer the call to Odo-Otin in about 1893 and were left out. Perhaps the Ogoga had not been recognised at the time of Johnson's writing. Probably the Onisan was expected to be in the North. Some believed that the Arinjale was for a long

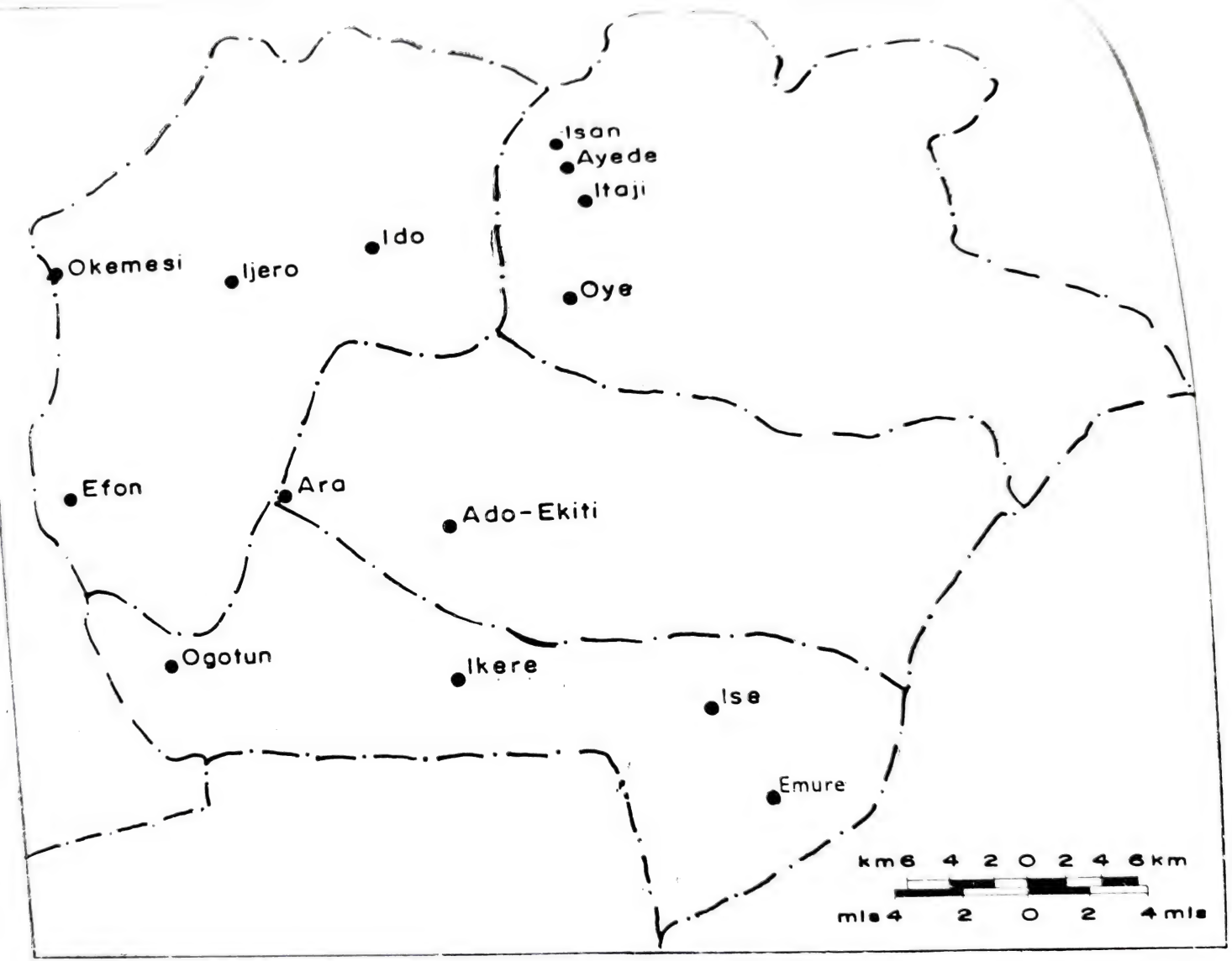

Fig. 3—Towns of Ekiti Obas as listed by Johnson (1921)

time the mouth piece of the Elemure. The Arinjale however challenged the Elemure in 1924 asking him to prove that he was an Ekiti Oba. At the material time the Elemure lost the Gazette showing Emure was an Ekiti kingdom and the fact was somehow known to the Arinjale. The Elemure did not succeed in proving his case until 1929, when he secured a copy of the Gazette at Enugu.

Reverend Johnson added "The Orangun of Ila is sometimes classed among them, but he is only Ekiti in sympathy, being of a different family. Ekiti mythology regarded the Orangun of Ila as one of the sixteen Ekiti Obas: "Olojamerindinlogun gb'epo i r'Aaye, "T'Orangun fo lule Ula" I ori un ni kun un mo reru sin ni" (Sixteen Olojas were carrying palm-oil to Aaye, that of Orangun broke at Ila Orangun. He explained that his good fortune forbad him to be a slave to anyone).

Johnson also called the Oore, the Ajero, the Elekole and the Ewi major Obas, and the rest minor. It is not easy to know what explanations can be given. The Ewi had very often been mentioned to the white man at Ibadan by Babamuboni, Oba Dadi and others. When Captain Bower was appointed to Ibadan in 1893, the Ewi sent presents to him through Babamuboni. That first impression was probably crucial. The Oore was relatively close to the first white man who settled at Odo Otin and who gave the Oore a kind of certificate which was among other things burnt in 1914.

The Ajero, the Elekole and the Ewi were "Brothers"—originally children of the same mother. Hence the favour received by any of them could have been shared by all of them. In addition the Oore, the Ajero, the Ewi and the Elekole were originally richer in men and means than the others.

It is also difficult to explain why Johnson did not list Alara as a major Oba. Ekiti mythology always regarded the Alara as the measure of the greatness of other Ekiti Obas.

"Alara segi i ta,
Orangun pon'mi i ta
Ewi Ule Ado o,
Oun ni mokun s'ayo
(While the Alara was yet a wood seller,
and the Orangun a water carrier, the
Ewi was already rolling in money).

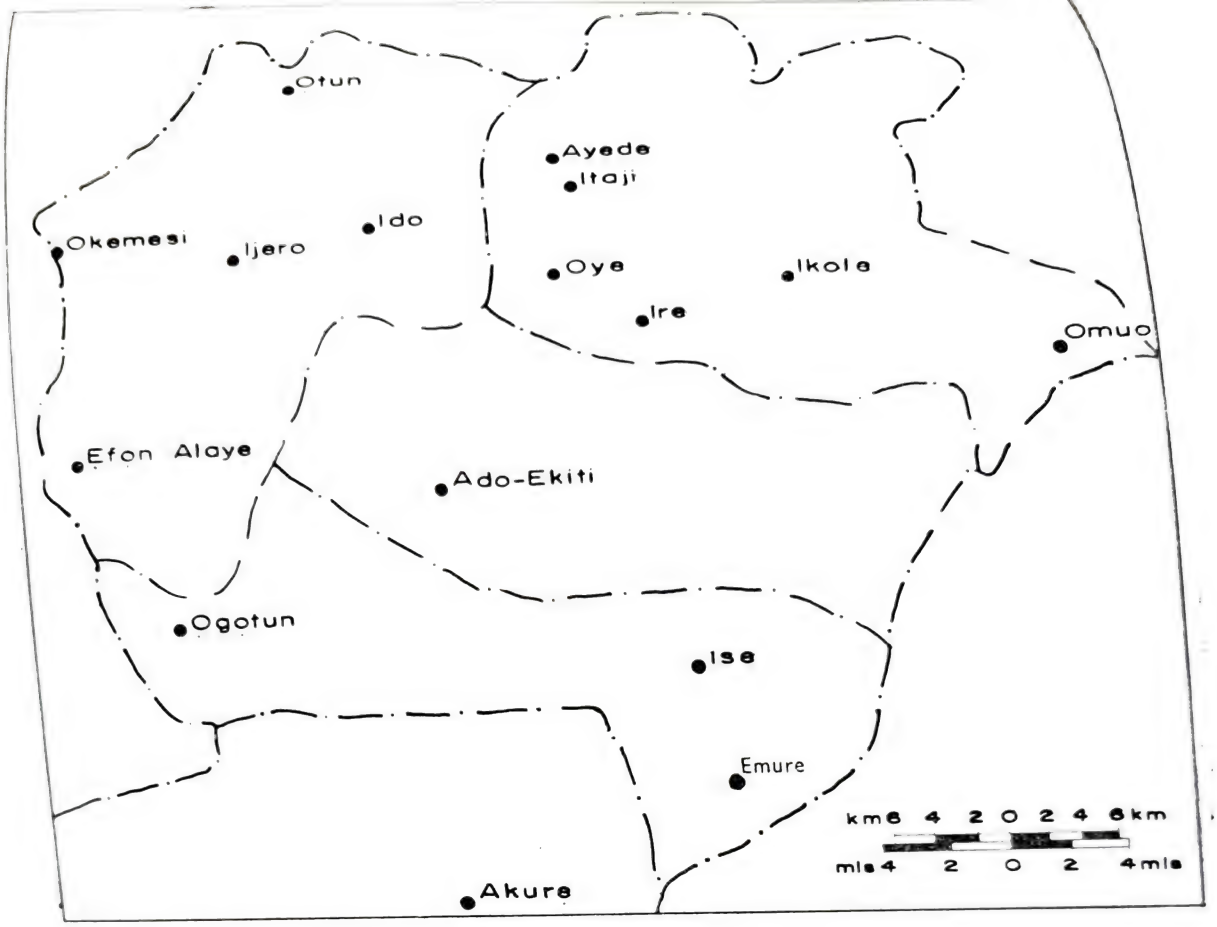

Fig. 4 — Towns of Ekiti Obas as Listed in 1902

The Alara was rich in men and means. The Alara was probably great and powerful. There was no time when the Ewi or any other Ekiti Oba for that matter could boast of 1,600 strong after two years hard fight with Ibadan as the Alara did. According to Johnson's testimony: "The people of Ara resisted Ibadan for two years and about 1,600 of their warriors burnt their property and committed suicide being unwilling to be exhibited at Ibadan as the conquered".[1]

(C) *Dr. S. A. Akintoye's Enumeration:*

Dr. Akintoye listed seventeen and yet left out Ayede, and Ire Ekiti.

Ayede:

Ayede kingdom was founded by Esubiyi, the Balogun and successor of Esukolo[2] and as such Dr. Akintoye was right when he argued that he was concerned with the original sixteen Ekiti kingdoms.

Ire:

Some argued that the Onire had only the "Ade Ogun" (Crown of Ogun). The arguement is lame because every Crown could thus be labelled. e.g. The Crown of Ogbo, the Crown of Egungun etc. depending on the specific idol worshipped by the Oba in question.

4. *Relationship:*

Originally, Ekiti Obas were in isolation, not withstanding the fact that all said they came from "Ife". Today, by reason of marriage, they are no longer in isolation. The Ewi, the Ajero and the Elekole were said to be brothers at a certain stage, being born of the same mother.

The burial place of the woman is at a place called "Okiti Eye-mode" along Ikole and Ado boundary. And similar story is told of Oloye and Onire.

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1. Revd. S.A. Johnson's History of the Yoruba. P. 321.
2. See page 89 below.

cir mother was buried in a shrine called "Yeye Aye" (Mother the world) along the boundary of Ire and Oye. The Olojido s said to be son to Elekole. Ajero, was also connected with ire. Ajero, Alara and Orangun were said to have been born of the me mother who was later buried at "Ipoti". It was taboo for kiti Obas, for years, to visit one another personally and to travel eyond a radius of two to three miles outside their Palaces. Thus Ado-Ekiti, once enthroned the Ewi must not see the brook alled Ofin on Iworoko road. Similar taboos confined other Obas f Ekiti.

In every place, there was a palace chief who made contacts on behalf of the Oba. Thus at Ado, Chief Odogun Minister of information, of death, accession and marriages performed this role. Another contact was made through the wives . The child of one Oba was usually brought up at the court of another Oba. The mother might make some contacts while visiting her son.

Moreover traders, carvers and workers formed a link between one Oba and another. But as from 1900, the government brought the obas together face to face at a meeting called "Pelupelu".

5. *Seniority:*

However the position of Ekiti Obas in relation to one another is still unresolved. The Elekole Oba Adeleye II said that no definite order was followed. He maintained that once the president took his seat the others sat right and left of him as they liked. The Ajero interviewed on this matter on 11th November, 1974, held that there were two types of meetings, namely: Judicial and ordinary meetings of the Obas. In Judiciary, the president (who was the Elekole) first took his seat and the other Obas sat right and left of him. The Ajero was always next to the Ewi. He said "When the Ewi sits, I know it is my turn to sit". To the question, why the Oore was regarded as the first Oba of Ekiti confederation, the Ajero answered that "The then Oore (1900) was the oldest Oba in Ekiti. Age was highly respected in Ekiti".

"At ordinary meetings", the chairs were labelled right and left of the Resident who always presided" said the Ajero.

In a reply given by the District officer, Ekiti to Mr. J.A. Oyekan on this issue he explained as follows: The members of the confederation are all independent and have equal rights in the Council

and their relative seniority is a matter of no practical importance. (Vide No. E. D. 100 "A/13 of 1st March, 1935). Although the District Officer maintained that seniority was not of practical importance, he explained that the Oloye ranked 9th and the Onitaji 13th and the Deji 5th, in order of seniority. May be seniority was forced on the Obas or they tried to avoid it, in order not to be forced to be under a particular Oba.

6. *Election of Ekiti Oloja*

The election of an Ekiti Oloja/Owa wether major or minor is still now made by the royal family. It is not the concern of the town or village as such. The main thing is that the town or village does not expect that a woman will be chosen. [1] The first son born after accession normally succeeded his father. Hence the term "Abilagba". (Agba was a drum which was sounded as soon as the successor was born). It was the duty of the elders to make sure the boy lived.

From time immemorial, rulers have always been worried about their successors Saul, David, Solomon, King Henry VIII, showed much concern about their successors. Among the Ekiti, the elders were anxious for their successors. To show their joy, a special drum was sounded at the time of the birth of a successor. Hence the term "Abilagba".

Some Abilagbas became excessively cruel and extremely proud. The system had to be abandoned. Anyone presented by his own family and known to be good was accepted. Three months after the death of an Owa the successor should be contemplated provided all ceremonies connected with the deceased had been completed. At first, it was simple, but later on, the children of the Owa broke into families and began to vie with one another for the stool. The result was that the town people began to take sides. Instead of the term "Abilagba" a new term "Irere Okin" was invented. Anyone whose course was sponsored by the Ifa Oracle was described as having seen Irere Okin" (feather of an egret).

1. Women had been Obas at Ado, Akure and some other places. It was most likely they were not elected as such but they were "Adele" and refused to leave when their time expired. See page 79.

7. *Ifa-Oracle:*

Since the arrival of the Olojas in Ekiti, our elders consulted Ifa oracle for every important undertaking. The election of an Owa was seen in that light.

When the number of the candidates standing for the election had been determined, the Ifa oracle was consulted for the most suitable who must have the following qualities:

(*a*) He must be Omo Ori Ite i.e. One born after the accession.
(*b*) His mother must be an Olori i.e. real wife of an Owa.
(*c*) He must not be the Dawodu (deputy) of the dying Owa i.e.
(*d*) He must be a legitimate son of an Owa.
(*e*) He must not have a palpable deformity[1]
(*f*) He must be handsome[2]

Age was not a qualification. A young boy of 5 years can be crowned as Oba. Each candidate standing for the election was represented with a cowry. The cowries were taken to the priest of the Ifa-Oracle. The name of each candidate was whispered by the chief electorate to the cowry. The cowries were then presented to the Ifa priest, who consulting the Oracle tells the characteristic of each cowry. A cowry may be associated with humper harvest while another may be connected with famine, and so on.

Guided by the opinions of the Oracle, the electorates make their decision. In some places, the successful candidate was secretly sent out of the town. This was described as "Lile - S'oko" (Driving to farm). After 21 days a group was despatched to fetch him and he was declared elected, and presented to the people.

After coronation, he was rarely seen in public and when he did appear, he wore a crown of beads or a cap of beads (Orikogbofo), red coral wristlets (any number), three red coral necklaces, five red coral anklets and a white horse or cow tail with a handle decorated with beads. He might sit on his throne "O jopo' or on a state chair in open air but under a state Umbrella.

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1. A disease or defect which has not developed before the election cannot prevent a person from being elected. If such disabilities follow after election the Oba would be in trouble for life. He becomes a persona non grata. If he is wise, a medical Doctor will come to his rescue.
2. He must not be (a) Abisoko Oka, (a slave) (b) Aburewa, (Ugly) (c) Agbudu, (Umbellicus) (d) Onika Mesan, (One who has lost one of his figers. (e) Olojukan, (One eyed) (f) Aditi, (deaf). (g) Adamu, (broken nose) etc.

Chapter Seven

EKITI SOCIAL RE-ORGANISATION

With the advent of the Owas/Olojas, the people under the same Owa/Oloja had to reorganise themselves for three reasons:-

1. More and new *idols* were introduced and they were to be propitated
2. Tributes were enforced by the Owas, and
3. The ensuing tribal wars necessitated re-organisation

A. Idols:

Before the arrival of the Obas, the father of the family was the family priest. With the new type of worships, priests were appointed to act for the Oba, who became the real priest of his people. In addition to that, some self appointed priests came from time to time specifically as supervisors of idols and not as farmers. They worked hard and made their presence felt by penetrating to every nook and corner of Ekiti as guests of the local priests. They taught the people to let Ifa-Oracle direct their actions including their new farms, they would be partner of one's son or daughter, one's proposed journey and so on. Specialists of Ifa oracle criss-crossed the country at regular intervals. Thus Ifa oracle dominated the scene. Even till today scarely any idol is worshipped without consulting Ifa-Oracle.

B. Egungun Cult.

This cult did not come from Ife. It came most probably from Akoko area, but it was warmly embraced by Ado Ekiti and later on copied by others.

C. Irunmole (400 objects of worship).

As the Ewi would boast of Egungun, so the Elekole would be proud of Irunmole (a conglomeration of idols). As a matter of fact, the name *IKOLE* came from this type of worship.

D. Other worships:

The worship of tools, trees, mountains, rivers and so on was common. In order to provide materials for worship, all the men were regrouped and were given special parts to play at the worship. When cowries were introduced, the elders were required not only to bring materials but also to pay certain amount of money called "*Ọsẹ́*" for purchasing certain materials to be used in public worship. Buildings were erected, seats provided and cloths bought. One significant thing was that before the British Rule, animals for public worship were never bought, they were just caught in the streets and sacrificed.

II. *Tribute:*

The people were reorganised to provide tribute to the Owa/Oloja. Every year the Oba of a place demanded yams, palmwine, and in some cases bush meat from his subjects. Later on the demand for the foodstuff and palmwine was no longer limited to what was needed for the worship. The Oba as the overlord thought that he was entitled to the gifts of his people. He saw nothing wrong if his servants should organise themselves and go to market to seize food materials and disappear without paying for them.

Tribute to an Oba continued till about 1940, although Obas were being paid salaries as far back as 1920. They enjoyed dual tribute until the people themselves felt they should stop collecting materials for the tributes. Usually the collecting and delivery to the palace of tributes were the responsibility of the males only. Ekiti social organisation embraces:

1. The family Council
2. The quarter Council,
3. The town Council consisting of the Oba, Agba Ilu, Elegbes, Egiri Owere/Isin, and women chiefs who represent women's interest. Later on, the District Council which was born as a result of war was added.

III. Wars necessitated reorganisation

According to the Elekole, Oba Adeleye II, the Ikole District council was originally formed for the purposes of war and was attended by all chiefs in Ikole town and in the neighbouring villa

ges. In Ikole, the Elegbe chiefs who were among the member of the Council were divided into three groups namely: Ogunna, Uro and Iremo. The members of Ogunna always fought in the middle in times of war. Those of Uro (Ogun Osi always fought on the left, and those of the Iremo (Ogun Otun) always fought on the right. The war captain or the Balogun was the Olomodekole who had three lieutenants) namely: the Ajagunna, the Elejoka and the Elenutan. They were in charge of three companies of divisions. When the Villages joined the mother town in time of war they were similarly divided into three companies. The villages of Otunja, Ijebu, Ara, Oke-Egbira, Esun, Ilasha, Ikun, Ode, Orin-Oke Ara and Eda joined the Ogunna group; Usin, Itapa, Ijelu and Asin joined the Uro i.e. Ogun Osi. Isaba, Orin-Odo, Ijesha-Ishu, Ikoyi, Isinpakude and Iro joined the Iremo, i.e., Ogun Otun. Each subtown had its own war captain and organisation but when they joined with the mother town, the Ikole war chiefs assumed control.

The traditional Ikole District Council never used to meet in former times except when war threatened the district and village heads and their councils seemed to have carried on the day-to-day affairs in their villages without interference from the Oba who was however informed of anything of note in the sub-town, such as the death of the village head and the choice of his successor, in which he had no right of refusal the candidates were of right chosen by the elders of the family in whom the title was vested. The right of attending the District Council was probably extended to all chiefs in the subtowns who were however satisfied in sending representatives from each group of chiefs, the representatives being those who were permitted by custom to voice their opinions in council.

After Benin and Ibadan wars, there was a major social re-organisation in Ekiti. Some towns including Akure, Ikere, and Ado-Ekiti followed the Benin set up. The others appeared to have followed Ibadan and Ilorin system. With respect to those who followed Benin system were the original "Agba Ilu" were divided into Ihare (Iyare) Iwarefa mefa and Agba-Ilu. Ikere-Ekiti was a good example. There were two principal groups of titled people: Iyares and Elegbes each of whom was subdivided into three classes as follows:-

The Iyare [1] 1. Iyare mefa (Senior Agba ilu)
2. The Iyare Arin (Middle Agba ilu)
3. The Iyare Ehin (Junior Agba ilu)

The Elegbe [2] 1. The Elegbe mefa (Senior Elegbe)
2. The Otu Imi (Middle Elegbe)
3. The Igboran (Junior Elegbe).

Those two groups combined to form the highest council at Ikere[1].

No Council in Ekiti had formal policemen except Ikere. The Councillors at Ikere who acted as policemen assisted in collecting tax "*Ọsẹ́*" annually.

Other Ekiti towns collected "Ọsẹ́" not annually but as the need arose. Efon and Ikere also provided a clear example of women chieftaincy.

In Ekiti, crimes were divided into four categories by reason of the offended: namely:- (1) Crime against the gods: (2) Crimes against neighbours; (3) Crimes against society and (4) Crimes against an Oba.

The first included insults to the *orisa* or to the priests at the shrine e.g. intentionally burning sacred groves, killing fish in a pool dedicated to the gods, such pools were common every where in the olden days e.g. the warm spring at Ikogosi: Fish in Oshun river in Iworoko, killing animals dedicated to the gods e.g. monkeys at Ikere etc.

Punishment varied from place to place but generally a host of annoying actions that might make the culprit commit suicide, were prescribed. In case of Incest the persons concerned were expected to kill a goat, strip themselves naked and flog each other round the town or village with the raw legs of the goat. The Ifa-oracle might prescribe other things.

II. Crime against persons included rape, wounding and theft. (1st Offence) In these cases compensation was demanded. Death or amputation was the punishment for theft . Anyone guilty of witchcraft was given "*Ọbọ̀*" (juice of sass wood) to drink. It was poisonous but if he or she survived it, he or she was declared innocent. III. Crimes against society, included (a) murder, manslaughter, arson whose punishment was death or flogging

1. Of Odu No. 3 page 42.
2. In other places Agba ilu and Elegbe are divided into Senior and Junior.

if offence was committed accidentally, (b) Kidnapping, the child was restored to the owner or the kidnapper might be enslaved to the Oba (c) putting bad medicine in a public place, the offender might be punished by making him eat the medicine.

IV. Against an Oba:

Adultery with an Oba's wife for which the offender earned a death penalty. Insults to an Oba would lead to the demolition of the house of the offenders, and stealing an Oba's emblem of office the culprit was generally enslaved to the Oba.

In all these cases, it will be noticed that there was no "imprisonment" or "dungeon cell". Ekiti knew nothing of prison yards until 1923, when the first prison was built at Ado-Ekiti. Immediate punishment of the offender was the rule not the exception. Any delay of judgement or punishment used to secure the culprit the sympathy of the public. If the judgement imposed capital punishment, the head was cut off immediately not tomorrow or next month.

Method of Killing a Criminal Culprit

A criminal was dealt with in one of the following ways:

1. The head could be cut off. That was the most common way of killing.
2. A person accused of witchcraft might be stoned to death or beaten with sticks.
3. Ọ̀fin i.e. a ditch covered with mats, was often used for personal vengeance. The victim sat on the mats and fell into the ditch in which fatal things had been diligently laid. As from about 1915. British officials began to interfere actively in the affairs of Ekiti. Native Courts were first established in Ado and Ikole and those who felt unjustly treated often ran to the district officers at Ado Ekiti.

The early Europeans - District Officers were carefully instructed not to antagonise Obas and the Natives wherever the natives were not accused of crimes against an Oba or a god or rather did not break the tradition of the place.

Many people who were brought to those D.O's and accused of things not relevantly serious were often lightly punished and set free e.g. when one of the slaves of Aduloju was accused of

kidnapping some one, the D.O. sympathised with the kidnapper saying: "the war was over, and those war boys had no farm, one should sympathise with them". He was set free.

When the Oore accused the Aworo of Owowo of Iyapa of sacrificing an Otun girl, the Aworo was arrested and was made to fish for the white man at Oke-Imo. British Government was very careful at first because their intention was to develop trade with the natives not Government.

FORMING EKITI SOCIETY, III.

After the Benin Wars, Ibadan Wars, The Ilorin Wars and the Nupes, movements into Ekiti were freer and frequent. Many Benins settled at Akure, Ogoga became the Oba of Ikere and many Oyos confidently settled there. They (Oyos i.e. people from Oyo, Ibadan Oshun area etc.) also settled at Ilawe, Esure, Ido-Faboro and Ado Ekiti. In that same period, Olupoti left Ajase for Ijero area.

Igbara-Oke was founded by a hunter called Uliji. The place later became a big market and was joined by a group of a discontented family of the Olowa from Igbara-odo.

The Oyos introduced Ogi and Eko as Breakfast. Most of them were morally low and within a short time dwindled to a minimum. They appeared very polite and everywhere they easily gained ascendancy by pretending to hate what they really loved. They would sit at the feet of the Baale/Oba at a convenient place where they could easily give suggestions and thereby gradually became the chief advisers of the Oba or Baales.

The Oyos were many at Ikere and played no small parts in helping Ikere against Ado during Ado/Ikere wars in 1882-1896, Their role was given in details by Fr. A. Oguntuyi in Ado History, page 52, Ed. 1953.

In about 1879, Aduloju helped Okas against the Nupes and also attacked Idoani and brought a large number of them to Ado and settled them at Odo Ado. As soon as his wars 1882-1896, were over, the gates opened to the Akokos and Owos. They were farmers and mixed freely with Ekitis. They settled permanently and owned land. But they were blocked from aspiring to be ruler. The most they could get was the title "Bale Alejo" as you see at

Ode and elsewhere. They are found in large group at Ilu-Omoba, Imesi Aré, Ado Ekiti etc. Movement from the north and north east into Ekiti is also in steady progress.

Immigrants from Oyo to Ikole are now called "Ikoyi". Immigrants from Ijesha to Ikole are named Ijesa-Isu. Immigrants from other places are the Oke Orin, Eda etc.

They are farmers and settled down to farming, comfortably.

Chapter Eight

SOCIAL UNREST 1800—1900

Introduction

As from the early period of the nineteenth century, the peaceful farmers of Ekiti began to be disturbed by rumours of wars and kidnapping. In 1815, the Benins came to Ekiti the third time[1] to help the Ikeres. They conquered Ado and appointed Ogoga as their Ajẹ́lẹ̀. The news of the sound of their guns disturbed Ekiti people. Almost at that particular time, a certain Ekiti man called Esukolo took a drastic revenge on the Ilorins. His activities were clearly described by Johnson.[2]

In 1842, Ibadans attacked Ara and conquered it. According to Johnson, they were invited by the Alara of Ara.[3] Having an easy conquest of Ekiti, Ibadan minor war chiefs raided north-east towns and villages. These and other causes led Ekiti to change some of their farm implements to weapons of war and to re-organise themselves into war groups. The Elegbes or Efas between the the ages of thirty and fifty were chosen in every town or village. They were the fighting groups of each town or village, under the leadership of an Akogun or Olori Elegbe. They were assisted by a junior group called Ijogun in most places. The Ijoguns were to load guns for the Elegbes and to fetch food.

1. *Benin Wars*

The quarrel between Ado and Ikere lingered on. The Benins were invited to defend Ikere on two former occasions which must be some years before 1815 when the Olukere invited Ogoga who was an Elephant hunter in Agamo forest between Igbara Odo and Ikere and Akure. He must have collected his followers and some Edos who were at Akure. They were between twenty and

1. A short History of Ado-Ekiti p. 37, 1953 ed.
2. History of the Yorubas by Johnson p. 308
3. History of the Yorubas by Johnson p. 317

thirty which was a big number in those days. They were used to war and well organised. They attacked Ado with their cutlasses. Ado bowed.

Ado promised to serve Benin but they failed. There was nothing Benin could do. Ogoga must have informed Benin of his achievements for the next five to ten years, the quarrel continued or with unabated venomy. The war consisted not of physical fight but of plundering the farms of Ikere and leaving those in Ikere to go hungry.

Ogoga was again summoned to attempt to defend Ikere. This time he must have informed the Oba of Benin who sent him some soldiers with a few crude guns. He must have been instructed not to kill but to terrify. They sent their spies who instructed the Ados that the Benins were coming and that they would be shot if they ran. As soon as they heard the booming of guns, they should describe a circle on the ground with ashes and stand in it with their hands raised above their heads, and thus showed their submission.

On the other hand the soldiers were told to shoot into the air in order to terrify the people. The noise of the booming of the gun was so loud and terrifying as to be compared to thunder ("Oba Edo ngbogun lo'de ale, Ogbomudu ngbe loju orun") the Oba of Benin waged war on the ground as the god of thunder waged war in the skies. Ado once more submitted and promised to be of good behaviour but they did not keep their promise.

The report was made to Benin and in 1815, they came the third time with more soldiers that were fully prepared for real war. They must have stayed a long time. Traces of pineapple and banana (Ogede Àdò) which they planted were found in Gboyin forests and other places, years after. It must be noticed however that the Ekiti had not yet formed themselves into one corporate group of fighters. That happened at a later date, 1879, when it became imperative to shake off the yoke of Ibadan as will be described later The Benins entered Ekiti from Akure side. They invited Aroloye, the Ewi of Ado Ekiti to make peace. They were defied by the Ewi who seemed prepared to fight but when the Benins actually approached Ado, Aroloye removed his men to Oke Oko, near Ifaki. The Benins entered the town without any resistance. They pitched their camp close to Uyin, fought Uyin and killed Ogbese-okun, the then Oluyin. The Benins did

not appear to be interested in slavery. They simply brought people from Ado, subtowns: Iyin, Igede, Awo, Ijan, Are, Afao, Igbo Omoba (Ilu-Omoba), and Agbado to Ikere and settled them there. Thus they increase the population of Ikere as they reduced that of Ado Ekiti. They also appointed a Benin Ajẹlẹ in the person of the Ogoga over Ikere. Thus Ikere became the colony of Benin.

Ogotun

Originally, was the largest town in Ekiti. (Ekiti legend) The Benins met a stiff resistance there and consequently reduced the town to thirty three persons and a dog. The Ologotun himself ran to Ikere to seek the protection of the Olukere who gave him a place at Ikere. Some of the descendants are still at Ikere and their leader is called Ologotun[1]. When the Benins were at Ado Ekiti, Uyin (Iyin) was their base. There they received an invitation from the Oore, popularly known as Ajisowo, to quell Aaye's rebellion. The Benins accepted the invitation. But before leaving Ado promised to behave better and to keep their allegiance.

On their way to Otun they attacked Oye but not much was done, because Oye was then in about five scattered settlements. To attack one of them was to give warning to the others to take to their heels. Although the Benins were tired and too far from home, the Oore attributed the success so far achieved to them. The Benins returned home and as it has been said above, they left Ogoga as their Ajẹlẹ.

When in 1893, the British Official, in the person of Humphrey, visited Ekiti, the Ogoga was in a better position to represent Ikere. Thus Ogoga became the Oba of Ikere, and gradually developed trade with Benin. Many Are people who had property at Are had ties with Benin, just as many Akures had.

As soon as the Benins returned home, Iyin, Igede, Awo, Ijan and Ogotun left Ikere for their respective towns. Some of the Are, Afao, Igbo-Omoba, Agbado and Ogotun who have properties at Ikere remained in Ikere but paid regular visits to their people,

1. The invasion must have left an indelible mark on the mind of the people such that an Ikere music expresses Ogotun's fear as follows:
"Agutan da giriri, Ologotun i ogun de Ogun mo de o, agutan ni".
(The stampeding of sheep indicates the approach of war in the mind of the Ologotun, obviously there was no war but mere sheep movement.

As it has been said above all the conquered whether they ran back home or remained at Ikere promised to serve Benin but the promise was never fulfilled. At least tradition did not say so and Benin could not exert her claim because of the distance.

2. *Aaye Rebelled Against Otun*

According to Oore Olubiyin II, the war with Aaye lasted 50 years and the Benins finally helped Otun to conquer them. Most of the towns north of Ekiti were at one time or the other under the Oore of Otun, but the largest of them was a town called Aaye. Because of its size and population they rebelled against Otun. According to Mr. D. Atolagbe, the first rebellion took place under the Oore known as Adifagbade. Dr. Johnson did not call it a "rebellion" but a boundary dispute between Otun and Aaye which culminated in a war in which Otun was worsted."[1] The people of Aaye invited Jimba, the head of Ilorin army but Jimba was a close friend of Adifagbade. Instead of Jimba fighting Otun, he got permission from Adifagbade to ravage the town of Aaye. Instead of a defence Aaye got an attack for which she was not prepared. That kept Aaye quiet for a time. Some years later when Oore Ajisowo was on the throne, the Aaye once more rebelled. They invited Dose, Balogun Ilorin, and Otun invited the Benins. It must be around 1815 when the Benins were at Ikere. The Benins came. It must be during the rainy season,they could not beat tornado and had to go back without achieving anything. The Aaye caught a Benin and killed him and hanged his head in the market. They danced for victory.

Total Subjugation of Ekiti By Ibadans

When Oluyole, the first Basorun (Head of Civil Affairs) of Ibadan and Kurumi of Ijaye, the first Ona Kakanfo (Field Marshal and head of Military Departments) were titled at Oyo under the Alaafin Atiba, one of the oaths they took was "to have a free hand over all Ijesas and Ekitis, to reduce them to subjection"[2].

Fortunately for Ibadan, Aaye and Otun invited outsiders over a boundary dispute as described above. The Oore requested the

1. Johnson page 282
2. Vide Johnson page 282

assistance of Ibadan and the Alaaye that of the Ilorins. Ibadan sent her army under Balogun Oderinlo and the Ilorin army under a Fulani leader, General Afuuku. The Ilorin army was defeated and many of its number taken slaves. After this conquest, Ibadan army ravaged Ọrọ (Ilọrọ), Iyapa (Ayetoro), Usi and Isan and continued to ravage the country until they were checked by the Itajis. According to Johnson, "The expedition opened the way for the Ibadan raids into Ekiti country which continued year by year until the whole of that province was brought under subjugation"[1].

From that point on, any little pretext was sufficient for Ibadan to overrun Ekiti for further raids. Moreover Ibadan now looked on the conquered part of Ekiti as the vassal of the Alaafin. Any attack on it by outsiders was regarded an attack on Oyo Empire. Hence it was no longer difficult to call Ibadan to defend North Ekiti. Shortly after, Esukolo invited Ibadan against Ilorin and the Alara against his people, Ibadan responded without delay.

For many years, Ilorins continually raided North Ekiti. On one of these ocassions a certain Ekiti man was taken slave to Ilorin. He was a native of Iye. Johnson described him as "A never do weel (well) of a roving disposition, unfit for any trade"[2]. His name was unknown but since he was fit for nothing the Ilorins would not hesitate to call him Esukolo. He was very good for mischief.

He served as a slave for a time at Ilorin and according to Johnson, he was redeemed by Mr. Laleye with 12 heads of cowries[3]. He later on married an ex-slave called Oni. Esukolo and his wife settled at Egbe. He busied himself kidnapping boys and girls of the area. He was particularly hard on the Ilorins who generally travelled to Egosi to buy kolanuts and palm-oil. Ilorin was not happy about this, but Esu was not a fool. He forestalled the Ilorins by being friendly with Ibadan. He always shared his booty with Ibadan under Ogunmola. After the death of Ogunmola, Basorun of Ibadan (+1867, February 28th) Esu was attacked by the Ilorins headed by the Balogun Ali but Ibadan came to his aid. As Ibadans were on their way they were delayed by Ikoro,

1. Vide Johnson page 296
2. Johnson page 308
3. 12 heads = Sixty kobo

Ara and Iloro wars, Esu kept the Ilorins at bay for three years at a place called Opin which is now part of Osi-Ilorin. Esu was however unfortunate: his greatest supporter, Aganga Adoja, a noble citizen of Opin suddenly died of accident and Esu had to escape to Isan, Oye, Ikole and Omu. He was hotly pursued by the Ilorins, but Omu being very rugged was impenetrable to the Ilorins. They were compelled to return home. Esu lived and died at Ijelu, where he was deified and worshipped till this day.[1] One of his followers, Esubiyi succeeded him as Balogun of Esukolo's group. Esubiyi settled in a place now called Ayede and took the tittle of Ata. (Oba of Ayede).

5. *Ikoro War, About* 1860

When the Balogun and his men left Igbajo to give further aid to Ekiti North, they discovered that they had no food and so they sent word to Ajero asking permission to collect yams from Ikoro farms and according to Johnson the Ajero turned down the request saying 'the Ikoros are wild boys, a yam may cost you a human head"[2]. On getting the reply the Ibadans attacked Ikoro at Ita Oniyan and at the river Oyi. Ibadans fought Ikoro for a long time without any hope of success. According to the people of Ikoro, the Ibadans invited Ikoro saying that Ogun (the god of war) was not happy about the war and that explained why there was no success on either side. The Ibadans suggested that Ogun should be worshipped. The Ikoros agreed. In order to do this, every instrument made of iron should be brought together. That was agreed upon on both sides. The day was fixed and merriment went on from sun rise to sun set. At sun set, the Ibadans further suggested that all the instruments should not be touched till the following day. They repaired to their camp and the Ikoros to their beds. At midnight the Ibadans came back and collected the weapons and attacked Ikoro, set fire to their houses and put the men to the sword. Thus Ibadan conquered by strategy what they could not by force of arms. But according to Johnson, after the

1. Johnson mixed up the two names - Esukolo and Esubiyi. He thought that the two were one man. They were two separate persons, namely: Esukolo and Esubiyi as confirmed by Mr. Micheal Ayeni of Ayede - Ekiti.
2. Cf. Johnson page 318.

siege of Otun, Esu and others came to help Ibadan against Ikoro, thus Ikoro was conqured.[1]

6. *Aramoko War*

Aramoko is one of the 16 kingdoms of Ekiti Federation. Ara kingdom territorially speaking was small but powerful. Ekiti mythology always put the Alara and the Orangun of Ila on the forefront for good or bad.

Causes of the War

(*i*) The Alara supported by the Oyos kidnapped and sold the children of his people. He was twice rejected and was twice reinstated by Ibadan.

(ii) The Alara prevented his people from coming to the aid of Ikoro when Ibadan was destroying it, but inspite of the effort of the Alara, Ara chiefs aided Ikoro against Ibadan.

(*iii*) The chiefs plotted the assassination of the Alara, but he escaped to Efon Alaaye.

(*iv*) The refusal of Ara chiefs to call back the Alara and to meet him in Ibadan camp which Ibadan had requested.

Ibadan Balogun raked up these causes as legitimate reasons for attacking and destroying Ara. Ara however held out for two years. When the Aras discovered that the hope of success was narrow, they burnt everything they had and committed suicide. Thus Ara was not strictly speaking conquered.

7. *Oro (Iloro) War:*

The people of Iloro aided Ikoro and to punish them, Ibadan surrounded their town and destroyed it. It must be borne in mind that the total subjugation of Ekiti to the Alaafin was the sole aim of all the wars and ravages.

After this any Ibadan war chief who so desired was allowed to lay hand on any Ekiti town he liked and enrich himself. Thus greediness was let loose. All the north and east Ekiti were ravaged.

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1. Cf. Johnson page 320.

Some of the war chiefs including Ayorinde, Abayomi , and Ajobo so enriched themselves as to forget home. Ayorinde was declared wanted at Ibadan. He sought refuge under Esu who sent him to Irun. He was known as *Aje* at Irun. There he organised a band of marauders and ravaged the area. He returned to Ibadan in 1872 carrying away the Egungun of Irun. The Masquerader is now called *Olóòlù* at Ibadan, and died the following year.[1]

Unfortunately by the time Abayomi and others thought of returning to Ibadan some Ekitis especially Akogun Irona, Ala of Aisegba, Aduloju and Faloo, had known how to defend themselves. As a result the Ekitis were able to intercept the Oyos and stripped them of all their possessions.

(8) *Ogotun:*

At Ogotun which was just recovering from invasion of Benin attack, Ibadan on their way to Ado Ekiti in 1872, within a few days reduced the place to nothing, The Ibadans then proceded to Ado Ekiti through Ara, Igede, Awo and Iyin.

(9) *An Unprovoked War:*

1873/Jan. 1874 - In order to avenge this disaster of Abayomi and to complete the subjugation of all Ekiti, Latosisa and his war boys attacked Ado-Ekiti in what Johnson called "An Unprovoked war".[1] The fight could be compared to that of a lamb and a wolf. The only person of note in this fight was Gbolako, the then Oluyin. He was captured and taken to Oyo. This led to the saying that "Ogun k'Ado ba si lai s'Uyin, etipa l'Ado gbekele". (without Uyin Ado never fights but runs). The war has been described in greater detail elsewhere[2].

(10) *Wokuti War*

On November 26, 1876, the Aare, elated by his successes at the first expedition to Ekiti January, 1874, began his second expedition for slave hunting[3]. He came to Ekiti through Ila-Orangun and camped at Iyapa (now Ayetoro) (Yahapa of Johnson). Attention was focussed on Ayede which was soon deserted. After the

1. Cf. Johnson p. 390
2. A. Oguntuyi, History of Ado
3. Cf. Johnson p. 403

death of Esukolo, the customary gift of slaves to Ibadan stopped. His successor, Esubiyi freed himself unilaterally from the yoke of Ibadan. Ibadan deemed it necessary to bring Esubiyi back to his senses. Hence the attention paid to the new kingdom of Esubiyi (then Ata). Esubiyi escaped to Omu-Ijelu a small town but built on high hills and strongly walled and surrounded by thorny thickets. The path way to Omu was narrow and well guarded. Omu had successfully repulsed three attacks of the Ilorins because the area was impregnable to Ilorin horsemen. The town was therefore considered safe.

The Ibadans were not horsemen. It was not difficult for them to ascend the rocks.

They attacked and captured Omu but their joy was short-lived. They moved further to Ikole and other parts of Ekiti. They encountered stiff resistance which Johnson reported as the "War of Wokuti". According to Johnson, dust was responsible for the losses suffered by the Ibadans[1]. "Dust" forced the Ibadans to return to their base at Iyapa (Ayetoro). The report of Johnson reminded one of Caesar's men. They were never *defeated*. They always *retreated*. The expedition was rather a failure. The Ibadans returned home on 19th Feb. 1876 and two years later faced a formidable army of the Ekiti - Ekiti Parapo War.

The failure of this second expedition gave Ekitis courage to challenge the Ibadan culminating in the Kiriji war which finally finished the Aare himself. He came to the war front but never returned home alive.

11. ISE/EMURE WARS, 1874/1875

1874/ *Wars.*

Ise apparently was very powerful and thus disregarded the likes and dislikes of all the neighbours. They offended Emure which they got Ibadan to destroy; Ado by killing and sacrificing to their idols some of those who escaped to Ise during the time Ibadan attacked Ado-Ekiti. Akure by seducing the Deji's wife Asabo. Emure in 1875, begged Aduloju to defend them againss Ise, the Deji requested Ogedengbe to punish Ise for seducing

1. If the story were as Johnson put it, the question of Ekitiparapo could not have arisen. The fear of Ibadan would have been so much as to make Ekitis keep away.

his wife. Aduloju and Ogedengbe attacked Ise and destroyed it, leading the flowers of the land into slavery.

It was said that after the 1874/75 wars, the Arinjale's stool was left vacant for some time and the Elemure Ajirotutu helped an Ise royal member, called Adebobola to ascend the throne. That gave the two towns a respite. Adebobola could not take part in Ekiti Parapo war because Ise was then a depleted town.

Adebobola died and left the stool to Arinjale Aweloye who was on the throne when the first White man visited Ise. Aweloye was a brave and wise Oba. When he noticed that the Elemure was not present at Odo-Otin and at Oke-Imo, he acted as a mouth-piece for him. The Arinjale for a time became more known than the Elemure.

After the death of Aweloye, Oba Aladimeji ascended the throne. In his days no Arinjale was in agreement with the Elemure. He accused the Elemure of pretending to be an Ekiti Oba, whereas he had no certificate and consequently could not have land. But the Elemure succeeded in 1929 of producing the necessary Government Gazette and thereby won the case.

12. *Ikere War* 1882–1886

The remote causes of the Ikere War included the refusal of the Olukere to acknowledge the Ewi as his overlord and the assistance given to Ikere by the Benins in 1815[1]. One of the immediate causes was the murder of Opele the Ibadan Ajele stationed at Ado-Ekiti. He was a native of Aramoko. He cooperated faithfully with the Ados. He was consequently loved by the people. He was attacked at Girimo farm and killed by the Ikeres. The Kiriji war was on and no attention could be paid to anything else. The Ewi, Ali Atewogboye, appealed in vain to Aduloju to silence Ikere. The Ikere with the assistance of Alaleitan and other Oyos trading at Ikere continued to drive Ados from Igirigiri farms. Atewogboye was forced to mobilise his men to resist their onslaught. Alaleitan was killed at Eliju Oniyo and the Ikeres were finally driven from the gates of Ado. The Ikeres though driven were undaunted. They launched the second and the third attacks. They were finally beaten

1. A. Oguntuyi, A short History of Ado-Ekiti, page 52.

at Oke Awaye. The intervention of the British Officials finally put a stop to the fight in 1893.

13. *Kiriji Wars*

There were two remote causes of the war. Firstly, as from about 1820, Ibadan gradually made Ekiti vassal of Alaafin and appointed Ajeles to Ekiti. That was unacceptable to Ekiti.

Secondly, most of the Ajeles appointed by Ibadan to Ekiti were reckless and irresponsible. The Ekiti towns, particularly Okemesi where the burden was felt most in about 1875 resented the ill-treatment. The very idea of an Oyo being overlord of Ekiti was really repulsive.

Ekiti appealed in vain to the Aare Onakakanfo who should normally be called Baale of Ibadan but preferred the title Ona Kakanfo (Generalissimo). The Aare did not listen to the Ekiti. The Ekiti threatened to rebel. Aare regarded their rebellion as a huge joke and replied that a single hunter can make one hundred birds on a tree feel very sorry.

Concerning the immediate causes, firstly, Fabunmi, son of the Oba of Oke-Mesi pregnated a trader, one of the wives of Ajayi[1], known as Ogbori-Effon. Ajayi could not be persuaded by begging or gifts from taking revenge. Secondly, Fabunmi cut off the head of four of Ajayi's six messengers sent to demand his head and the remaining two were sent to Ibadan to tell Ajayi the story.

Ajayi prepared for war. Fabunmi contacted his friend Adeyale of Ila Orangun who advised Fabunmi to see the Oore of Otun. The Oore sent messages to all Ekiti Obas who held a meeting at Otun and sent word to the Owa of Ilesa. And thus Ekiti prepared for war.

Even though Ekitis were farmers many of them were very brave and Fabunmi of Oke-Mesi was a fine warrior. Fabunmi took the lead and appealed to all Ekitis to come together to fight a common enemy. Hence the term "Ekiti-Parapo" i.e. Ekiti come together. The clarion call was answered by Ekiti Obas except the Ewi of Ado and the Ogoga who were then at war with each other.

1. Otun History by D. Atolagbe page 31.

The following Ekiti Obas and their men took part in Kiriji war:

1. Oore of Otun.
2. Ajero of Ijero.
3. Olojido of Ido Faboro
4. Oloja of Oke-Mesi
5. Olugbosun representing the Oloye
6. The Alara of Ara
7. Ata of Ayede
8. Onisan of Isan
9. Onitaji of Itaji
10. Olosi of Osi-Ado
11. The Elekole of Ikole
12. Agbemuko. The Owa of Osu-un.
13. Balogun Afogbangba, of Isan

The leading Ekiti warriors who took part were Fabunmi and his friend Adeyale, Apalaso and Agada. In class by himself was Ogedengbe, the Ijesa leader. Until the time of that war the Ekitis were farmers but when they were driven to the walls they felt they must do something. With a bit of organisation and training Ekiti hunters were convinced they were up to the task. They came together and built huts for their wives and children. They planted yams and corn to supply themselves with food. The war lasted thirteen years. The Ilorins were the allies of Ekiti.

Ajayi Ogbori-Effon led Ibadan soldiers. His hope was to wipe Ekiti off within a week. His dreams appeared to be coming true when he succeeeded within a few hours to clear Ekiti from their first stand.

The Kiriji wars started in 1879 and would have continued indefinitely but at the request of the Alaafin, British Officials came to stop it in 1886. For the period of seven years, the wars were in favour of Ekiti. Ibadan lost even the Aare-Ona-Kakanfo[1].

It is related of one of the Akoguns of Iyapa (now Ayetoro) that his father was captured by the Ibadan during an earlier raid. The Akogun was then very young. The boy grew to be very brave and fearless . He was made Akogun (Leader of the Elegbes of Iyapa). During his encounters, he was successful and recaptured many

1. For further details, see Johnson, op. cit 423
Akintoye, ,,
Oguntuyi, ,,

of the Ibadan slaves, among whom was his father. This truth was unknown to him. He later on allocated jobs to his slaves. He put the old man in charge of his bathroom. The old man was to scrub the back of the warrior any time he had his bath. The old man suspected that the warrior was his son because of the scar on his back. The scar was the result of the flogging he sustained when he was naughty. But it was difficult to ask him whether he was his son. One day the old man instinctively burst into tears and the Akogun demanded an explanation. He (the old man) explained that the Akogun was his son and that he knew it by the scar on his back. The Akogun believed and began to treat him as his father.

Kidnapping:

All wars in Ekiti were over by 1886, but warriors and their servants had no farms from which they could collect food crops. They exchanged slaves for yams and continued to kidnap other new slaves till about 1900 when it became illegal to kidnap anybody. The British control was then becoming effective.

By 1900, slave owners were forced to release their slaves. Many of them had embraced Islam or Christianity at Lagos, Abeokuta Ibadan, Sokoto and Ilorin.

Islam:

Those who served as slaves at Ibadan, Ilorin or Sokoto embraced Islam and returned home to spread the religion. They went first to the Oba/Baale and made him a convert. It seemed the Oba/Baale thus converted was not bound to do away with his idols and his numerous wives nor was he bound to hold any of the tenets of Islam. All that was required was for him to come to the Mosque and present a ram once a year. All muslims were to appear before him once a year to say prayers in his Palace.

MURDER AT AMU

Towards the close of the reign of Aladesanmi I, Ewi Ajimuda-Oro a certain Oyo trader, woke very early to travel to Igbo Akoko. He was hardly outside the Ado town when he was murdered.

Neither the name of the murderer nor his purpose was revealed the corpse was not found. Soldiers were drafted from Ilesha. After a fruitless search, the soldiers left. It was the first murder at Ado. Since then the saying is "Me a ji y'oko, me a k'ero Amu lona, i an mi ka binu sa mi lada asagbe". (I pray that I may neither go early to farm nor meet Amu people who will angrily cut me to pieces with their cutlass and get away with it).

Part III 1893—1939

Chapter Nine

SOCIAL CHANGES 1900-1913

From the end of the Kiriji War to 1939.

Kiriji war was over in 1886 and the Ekiti returned home in 1893 to continue paying the usual respects to Obas and Baales, but the people were no longer the same. Many of those who distinguished themselves at the war front claimed many privileges. They became unusually bold and their children inherited the tendency.

The story of the white men who stopped Kiriji war spread like wild fire and Ekitis were eager to see them. And out of a deep sense of gratitude, accepted white visitors as friends. The Ekiti Obas were registered at Odo Otin. It was not at first considered serious but whenever an Oba who was not at Odo Otin behaved irregulary he was immediately threatened with the idea of his not being present at Odo Otin.

British officials, since the proclamation of the Decree at Kiriji, visited Ekiti frequently and acted in advisory capacity. Their advice particularly on trade was most pleasing to all Ekiti Obas. Gun-powder as well as Schnapps and Gin were made available at cheap rates. Every effort was made to strenghten the authority of the Obas. Thus they made themselves welcome guests. Whatever changes they suggested as being good were approved and accepted without any question.

All Ekiti warriors were rounded up and brought to Odo-Otin and warned not to engage in fighting or slave hunting. They were ordered to set their slaves free.

Although Ekiti tradition did not permit the Obas to move around or to see one another or to cross certain rivers they were invited to meetings which they felt compelled to attend. They had to veil their faces while passing through those places which they were not expected to see. At such meetings, if any Oba should not normally see any particular Oba he had to sit turning his back to him. All that was required was to hear and be heard. Ruled

out in such circumstances was the idea of "Oju l'oro wa" (the effectiveness of a discussion depends on its being done face to face). Gradually the veil was removed, the Obas saw and were seen exchanging views freely.

1. OTUN PUT UNDER ILORIN 1900—1936

Until now Ekiti tradition was quite stable. Each of the sixteen Obas was independent and rarely moved out of his Palace. He was not even allowed to see another Oba in person.

Around 1901 during the reign of Oore Oba Adifala, an Otun woman with her daughter went to Iyapa market and the girl was seized by the Iyapas and sacrificed to their idol. When the incident was reported at Otun, a group of people was dispatched to Iyapa. They made a thorough search, and on the third day, the mutilated body of the girl was found afloat in a pond, with all the parts needed for sacrifice already removed.

The Oore sent word through Alebiosu (Chief Obajana) to the white man at Oke Imo - Ilesa. The white man, Ambrose nicknamed "Akerele" came and arrested Akokiti, the priest of the particular idol to which the girl was believed to have been sacrificed, and some others, but they were not punished other than being made to be fishing for the white man. The Otuns were not happy about this.

At that particular time a certain Ilorin man known as Giwa - a blacksmith, living at Odo-Oja, Otun, and another man called Fasiku from Omuaran secretly planned to put Otun under Ilorin. They approached the Oore and adviced him to invite the white man living at Ilorin so that he would punish the Iyapas. The advice looked good but something else was behind it. The white man was sent for. He came and burnt the sacred grove of the idol. That punishment meant nothing to the Otuns, who expected those who killed the girl to be hanged.

According to the Oore Olubiyin II, two white men arrived at Otun market, and with lead pencil appeared to have marked the boundary between Ekiti and Ilorin, putting Otun under Ilorin without consulting Oore or his people.

Some months later some soldiers came from Ilorin saying that the Oore was wanted by the Emir. Adifala replied that he had

never had any dealing with the Emir. The second group of messangers came and the Oore would not budge. During this time everyone became suspicious of the activities of Giwa, but nothing could be done. The third group consisted of about six soldiers. They came and arrested Adifala and took him to Ilorin from where he was exiled to Ila-Orogun where he died some years later.

2. EFFORT TO CENTRALISE EKITI AUTHORITY

Although Ekiti was a compact territory, up to the year 1900, the sixteen kingdoms in Ekiti ruled their subjects independently. The Ewi for instance on his election must visit certain shrines and once installed must never see those places again. The same was true of other Ekiti Obas. They were not allowed to travel.

Major Reeve Tucker who was in 1899 appointed Travelling Commissioner for Ijesha and Ekiti with his seat at Oke-Imo (Ilesa) visited Ekiti in January, 1900. After visiting all Ekiti important centres, he invited all Ekiti Obas to Oke Imo, (Ilesa) Residency.

They arrived there on 18th June and on 21st June at 2.00 p.m. formed the Council Meeting. Its first business was to determine the seniority of the sixteen kingdom[1]. It was an important event in the administration of Ekiti country.

3. THE OLOSI OF OSI EKITI

(*a*) The Olosi was one of the first among those under the Ewi to agitate for independence. On account of this, Aduloju attempted to attack Osi but the Ewi Atewogboye objected strongly. Aduloju insisted. He besieged Osi but Atewogboye sent Akogun Irona to drive him from the place. He narowly escaped with his life. He was attacked at Ojido Forest. A street skirmish followed. The only one killed during the fight was Atabata, the head servant

1. Diary of W.R. Reeve Tucker: Oke Imo, Ilesha: 18-6-1900 "Delegates for Ekiti kings (Ekiti council) arrived" 21-6-1900 "First Ekiti Council Meeting, Seniority of its several members decided." This was an important event in the administration of Ekiti Country.— File No.....p. 21.

of the Akogun. He received a gunshot at the chest and collapsed. Some time later the Olosi again put up his case but this time he did not receive the sympathy of the British officials. He was seriously warned by Major Reeve Tucker.

(*b*) When Captain W.A.G. Ambross nicknamed "Akerele" who succeeded Major Reeve Tucker arrived in Ekiti, he warned the Olosi against the wearing of crown and settled the land dispute between Olosi and Olojido in October 1901. It was this dispute that made Ajero and Olojido in November 1901 forbid their men to attend the Osi market. But further amicable settlement was made by the Ewi Ajimudaoro. In 1904, Ambrose seized Olosi's crown at Oke Imo. In 1906, Ambrose took one of the Olosi's sons named Prince Agunbiade to school at Lagos, and gave Olosi a Raleigh Bicycle.

4. OYIMO BOUNDARY

In June 1902 to forestall a dispute between Ekiti and Akoko, the Government ceremoniously demarcated, at the Oyimo river, the boundary between Ekiti and Akoko. It was customary to mark boundaries in Ekiti with "Iyan" (pounded yam) and porogun. These two materials used to last years. "Iyan" does not easily decompose and porogun never succumbs to white ants or lose leaves during dry season. But since the British officials had interest in this boundary, a European way of marking boundary must have been used in addition to the native method.

Present at the ceremony were: The Ewi, Ajimudaoro, Aladesanmi I: The Elekole of Ikole, Oba Adeleye I, the Onimesi, Ola Ibiyemi Ojugbaye II, the Olode of Ode and the Elegbe of Egbe.

5. ONIRE IN CONFLICT WITH THE BRITISH OFFICIALS

In 1905, during the time of Arinmooye, the Onire of Ire, news came that one vaccinator "a very sturbborn man", arrived at Ire for vaccination. He was accompanied by a number of drummers playing for him.

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1. Origbemi. (I am lucky) seemed to be the name of the vaccinator Ajagio was a big title at Ire. Some people must have directed the vaccinator to the chief's house as being clean and spacious. This however should not have prevented him from paying a courtesy call on the Onire before going to chief Ajagio.

He did not pay the usual courtesy to the Onire, He lodged himself in the house of a chief called "Ajagio"[1]. The chief was afraid since there was no message from the Onire about the visitor. Ire was then in scattered compounds. Even though a visitor could mistakenly sidetrack the Oba's palace, he must do the correct thing when the mistake was pointed out.

The chief therefore went to the Onire to complain that a certain "Imaro" (a white man's messenger) arrived at his place without his knowledge and approval. Furthermore his drummers were singing:

"Origbemi loke lule Ajagio lo wo,
Orisa gbe mi l'oke lule Ajagio lo wo"[1]

As a result, the Onire did not permit him to vaccinate. He went back to report that he was obstructed in the lawful discharge of his duty. The Onire was summoned to Oke-Imo. He was accused of:

(1) not allowing the vaccinator to do his work, and

(2) not being registered at Odo Otin (The Onire was not present at Odo Otin because he was too old to travel). The Onire was fined fifty pounds (£50 = ₦100) but Mr. Farinako a member of the Onire's family prevented the Onire from paying the fine. His crown was seized, but he had more than one crown. As a matter of fact, he took the whole thing as a joke. On the contrary, the Government viewed Onire's action with seriousness and therefore put Ire under Oye. In this way, Oloye and Onire were brought into conflict.

Relationship of OYE and IRE:

The Oyes said that a younger brother, Arokinsona, of the family of the Oloye left Oye and settled at *UDO* near the present site of *IRE*. He became the Onire of Ire. The *IRES* on the other hand admitted that Oloye and Onire were brothers, born of the same mother, but that *IRE* came direct from Ife and settled at *UPO*. They were led by their god-OGUN, patron of warriors.

2. The song meant: I am lucky to have lodged in the house of Ajagio, the gods are in my favour for putting up in the house of Ajagio.

The first Onire Odundun-Okun was of the Elegemo family of Ikeleju, a quarter at Ire.

Ire was in five settlements until about 1925, when they started moving together at the present site, Each settlement is now a quarter in Ire. They are: 1. Ikeleju, including Inidara, Ilegemo, Ikete, now called Surulere. 2. Odo, 3. Egbe, 4, Iyeni and 5, Iniyein.

6. ONIRE AND OLOYE IN CONFLICT

The British officials made it clear to the Oloye that the Onire was not entitled to wear a beaded crown and that Ire was under Oye. This worsened the collision between the Oloye and the Onire. And the British Officials sat back and continued to enjoy the joke.

In 1911, the Onire went to Lagos to see the Governor. He complained that his crown was taken at Oke-Imo and that he had made known this deprivation to Owa of Ilesha and Council who were in his favour. He added that he had seen the Oni who also supported him yet his crown was not returned to him. The governor, however, did not want to interfere. He persuaded the Onire to go back home and settled with Oye.

A letter sent to Oke-Imo to find out what was happening was replied to on 16/10/1911, from Ilesha, by Mr. A.W. Butterworth justifying the action of the District Commissioner. Mr. Butterworth argued that the District Commissioner in consultation with the Elekole of Ikole, the Ata of Ayede, the Onitaji of Itaji and the Onishan of Ishan forbad the Onire to put on beaded crown. The Onire, according to the Commissioner, was a Báalẹ̀ under the Oloye (File 0/29/1923).

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1. *Vaccination:* The first vaccination in Yorubaland outside Lagos was done at Ibadan around 1905, surprisingly the next target was Ire Ekiti. Perhaps it was by a special arrangement and the assistance of Ires resident in Lagos.
The vaccinator was not an Ire, for no Ekiti would come home with drummers. Ire had no specific illness which warranted vaccination.

N.B. The mother of Oloye and Onire was called *Eye- Aye.* She died and was buried midway between the old Ire and old Oye.

After the death of Arinmoye, Ire chiefs diplomatically pledged loyalty to Oloye and succeeded in getting Government to approve the appointment of Farinako as Onire in succession to Arinmoye. In 1917, the District Officer reported the death of Arinmoye as the end of the conflict. During the September quarter report, the District Officer recorded as follows: "The old Báalẹ̀ died in May 1915. A long standing feud between the Onire of Ire and his overlord, the Oloye of Oye, has been brought to an end by the death of the former. This dispute has gone on for years, and has been enquired into by every political officer who has charge of the District. The chiefs have now made an open avowal of the overlordship of the Oloye and one Onire (Farinako) has, with the consent and concurrence of the Oloye, been appointed Baale of Ire, and will have a seat on the proposed Oye Native Court" (September Report quoted from the letter to the Secretary, Southern Provinces, Lagos).

The officials soon discovered that they were deceived and the District Officer, Ado-Ekiti, remarked: "This new appointment has not improved matters" (D. O. Ado-Ekiti, Letter No. 430/1917, dated 9/11/1917. The new Onire neither complied with the wishes of the Oloye nor yielded to the threat of the District Officer. On 21/11/1917, it was planned to arrest him but he foiled the plan by giving himself up at Ikole, a few minutes before the plan was due to be executed. Farinako was told by the District Officer that the case would be dealt with at Oye.

In January 1925, Ekiti Obas decided that Onire should wear the Ogun Crown only during the Ogun festival, but the Onire did not comply with this. He continued to appear in public with a beaded crown. In about 1928, when he applied for a sessional court, he promised obedience and loyalty to both the D. O. and the Oloye. But when the sessional court was on in 1930, the Onire appeared to be better placed than before and continued to wear the beaded crown. Farinako died in 1935 and was succeeded by a young employee of the Survey Department, Mr. S. O. Adeyeye on 23rd June 1935. Oba Adeyeye secured the independence of Ire in 1964. As soon as he ascended the throne, he began a series of reforms. The most important of these was the establishment of school at Ire. A lot of sacrifice was made before the first school was established. Ire elders forbad the institution at Ire, An Ire boy or girl who wanted to study had to do so secretly abroad. Adeyeye

had to get the elders to remove the "Esi"[1] by killing a cow and settled the whole affair.

7. DEPORTATION OF OLODE AND ONIMESI

In 1908, Aladesanmi I was invited to Osogbo for the opening of rail road linking Ibadan with Oshogbo. It was the first time any Ewi would venture out of his domain. He was highly honoured by all the Obas present at the ceremonies. Two years later, 1910, Aladesanmi I died and was in the same year succedded by Adewumi who took the title of Agunsoye, being a very handsome person. After his installation all Ado District heads (Baales) except Onimesi and Olode joyfully paid homage to him. Onimesi, Ola Ibiyemi, Ojugbaye II and the Olode refused to recognise Adewumi as their overlord. Mr. Humphrey who was then the representative of the British Government in the area tried to reason with them. But when they neither listened to him nor obeyed the Ewi, they were sent into exile at Oyo, the Onimesi for six years, and the Olode for five years[2].

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1. ESI. This was a Term used by Ekiti elders to prevent a thing to be done. It consisted of burying certain things in the ground. The place was marked with a heap of stones. If anyone jumped on the stones, he must submit himself to a hard flogging.

   IRE "gesi" i.e. buried something in the ground the object of it was that no school should be built in the town. Oba Adeyeye removed the Esi by slaughtering a cow for the elders and he was given permission to remove the Esi.

2. Tradition holds that the present Imesi Alasigidi was once a very big town. The inhabitants were scattered by tribal wars. Some of them settled at Imesi Ipole, others at Imesi Oloja-Oke.

   One account says that the Onimesi was one of the sixteen sons of Odudua and that he was consequently a crowned Oba but that the crown was taken away to Imesi Oloja-Oke.

   Another account put the Onimesi in the same category as Elesun. He was certainly a crowned Oba, but he had lost his right to the crown as a result of the repeated victories over him. Imesi is believed to have been conquered by Ado twenty one times and finally reduced to the present state. Aduloju and his men settled there as from 1879.

   The Olode was believed to have been brought under the Ewi through the conquest brought about by Aduloju.

Chapter Ten

SPECIAL NOTES

1. ALARA AND ALAAYE

Alara and Alaaye were born of the same mother. After her death, the Alaaye sent Ijaranyin to bring the body to Efon for burial. The Alara instructed Isha to prevent the body from being taken to Efon. In the ensuing fight the Efon messenger conquered Isha. Hence even till today the legend maintains, an Ara expresses surprise by saying "Ijaranyin npa Isha o" (Ijaranyin is beating Isha). The quarrel was settled by burying the woman on the top of the hill midway between Ara and Efon.

According to chief Oisinkin of Efon, the term Efon was given to the present site because Elefon now worshipped as Emila of Efon was the name of the idol worshipped by the people of his quarters and he was the first to settle at the present site. The Alaaye was then at Oke Igbole Aaye. Oisinkin was a chief of the Alaaye in Aaye quarters. But Mr. Ogundahunsi maintained that the term Efon means, the conqueror of Efon (buffalo), because at one time buffalo (Efon) were very common in the area. Efon chiefs however were silent on the matter.

The Oore, Oba Olubiyin II said that Alaaye was the head of Aaye a city conquered and scattered by Otun people when the Oore occupied the present site of Otun. Oba Olubiyin believed that all towns/villages known as Aaye in or around Ekiti were from the same source. He maintained that Aaye meant "Ari raye" (busy). In that case Alaaye would mean the owner/lord of people who were always busy.

According to Efon tradition, the present Alaaye Oba Aladegbemi is the sixty-fifth Alaaye, Efon must have been founded many years ago, if this was true. The names of the Alaayes are not known except those who ruled after the tribal wars.

Originally the Alaaye was always selected from one family but according to chief Oisinkin, the Alaaye known as" Alas-e" had many outstanding children not of the same mother. Three

of them succeeded in turn and since then the selection of the Alaaye has been made from (1) Idi Otutu, (Otutu family); (2) Idi Igboro (Igboro family), and (3) Idi Orudu (the Orudu family) since the Ibadan war, the following have reigned in turn in each Family:

Idi Otutu:	As-emojo,	(2) Arusuboja &	(3) Aladegbemi.
Idi Igboro:	Ogbinuote,	(2) Ajogede &	(3) Agunsoye.
Idi Orudu:	Obelogun,	(2) Atewogboye &	(3) Adeniran.

The Alaaye was driven from Igbo-Oye by war and when the warriors on horses pursued him, they found the Oisinkin at the present site. The warriors (probably the Ilorins) asked for the Oba, the Oisinkin showed them the way but forbade them to use their horses in his camp. Hence the Oriki "Emi Ijoye Oba Efon kẹ ẹ ẹjian mẹsin rin Ọgbọn Isikin" (I am the chief of Efon forbidding horses to be used at Isinkin) The men followed Alaaye but entering the forest at the Omi Ejigan they discovered that mushroom covered the path. They concluded that Alaaye must not have gone that way, they turned back. Thus mushroom saved the life of the Alaaye. Hence Alaaye does not eat mushroom.

When the Alaaye settled at the present site, villagers from five various settlements settled around him. They are: (1) Obaloja at Obalu (2) Oisajigan of Ejigan (3) Alayọ of Ẹmọ (4) Peteko of Isaja and (5) Ojubu of Oke-Agbe. Thus six villages make up Efon Alaaye. These six villages have closed ranks and become six quarters in Efon.

Efon kingdom is believed to have had twelve subtowns and nine of these were removed to Ilesa by Ogege-Epo the Alaaye who was exiled and became the Owa of Ilesa later on.

The numbers of the Alaayes are known because there is a particular chief Oisinkin of Aaye in charge of the number. The Oisikin of Aaye has a string of cowries each cowry represents an Alaaye.

Emure Fire: 1917

Almost all houses in Emure were thatchroofed. They were surrounded with bush. Any burning of bush around a building, or carelessness in handling a naked light in the house or any cooking of soup with certain type of oil might result in conflagration that could not be controlled. In this way, Emure in 1917 was almost completely destroyed by the child of Mr. Olugbe. There were no

firemen and no tap water that could be used easily. Towards the close of his reign, he ran into difficulties with the Arinjale of Ise. The Arinjale in a land case accused the Elemure of not being an Ekiti Oba and could not consequently have land. To prove he was an Oba, the Elemure must produce the gazette in which he was registered, but the gazette disappeared from the palace. A copy of the gazette was recovered at Enugu in 1929.

2. ITAJI KINGDOM

Itaji is the smallest Kingdom in Ekiti. She has an area of 16 square miles. In 1931, the population was 1150. Itaji is situated at the foot of the hill running from Ishan to Ilupeju and as such the area is well watered and wooded. Itaji suffered immensely from Ibadan and Ilorins. The Itajis were brave and fearless and as such tried to resist the enemies instead of running away like the rest. Itaji fought bravely but was defeated and almost wiped out.

Farming was the main industry of Itaji. Capt. Pullen in 1929, reported that of the 270 male adults of Itaji. 160 were farmers, 92 were labourers. The total income of the kingdom was £799:0s:0d (₦1598.00). There were 167 acres of yams, 159 acres of corn. Cocoa was hardly grown but tobacco was a popular crop. The only market was Atiba right in the front of Onitaji's palace. It was held daily.

Itaji suffered much from incessant attacks and raids. The first attack came from the Ibadans in about 1842. One Mr. Ajubu, after taking Iloro (Oro), Ayetoro (Iyapa) and Ishan, attempted to capture Itaji. He was ambushed and killed. The second attack came from the Ilorin's under Ajia. Ajia captured Otun (Awtun). Idofintegun and Okua. Then Ilorin under Ali raided the area in an effort to capture Esubiyi, the Ata of Ayede. Ali was bravely resisted by Itaji but Ali took hundreds of them as slaves "Only six persons and a dog escaped".

It is difficult to know and remember the names of the Onitajis because of the numerous raids. But the following names are recalled:

1. Aribiyanloye;
2. Ifamiwa;
3. Amojojoye &
4. Adeleye.

ARIBIYANLOYE was succeeded by Ifamiwa whose reign was noted for three things: (1) *Esubiyi*, who enlisted Ibadan support and took the title of Ata and settled on Itaji and Isan lands and founded the town of Ayede. (2) After the victory over the Ewi of Ado in 1874, Ibadan made Iyapa in 1875, their base and marched towards Ayede and Itaji whose people vacated and retreated to Omu which was captured. Here Olijoka, an important Elegbe was killed. (3) Onitaji supplied a contingent to the camp at Okemesi-Ipole under an Elegbe called Okunbari towards the Ekiti Confederation of 1877. Ifamiwa died during Ekiti Parapo War, and was succeeded by Amojojoye, his half brother who was murdered by Mr. Onike.

Major Reeve Tucker on 2nd Jan. 1900, visited Itaji and tried Mr. Onike on 3rd Jan., in the presence of the Itaji Chiefs for the murder of the Onitaji. He sentenced Onike to death. Amojojoye's successor was Adeleye, who was elected in April 1900. He had just returned from Ilorin captivity when he was elected.

"The smallest unit in Itaji is a group of families (ebi) with the senior member as the head. The quarter arrangement is similar to that of Oye" — N.A.C. Wier.

The Native court ordinance was introduced in June 1915, the Itaji District was placed in Ikole Native Court area. On 31st March 1916, a "C" grade court was established at Oye for the Oye, Ishan, Ayede and Itaji Districts and Itaji cases were heard at the Assizes held at Ayede. In April 1921, a sessional court at Oye Native court was held at Itaji and on the 3rd, May 1927, the Itaji court became a separate "C" grade Court with the Onitaji as the president.

Mr. N.A.C. Wier, who was Assistant District Officer at Ado in 1934, thought that the people of Itaji were the most isolated from the modern trends in Ekiti, and were much neglected by the Government. He held that the Itajis were quiet unassuming but possibly stubborn. He said that Itaji showed less inclination to talk of their customs than other local folks (Intelligence Report. 1934).

3. AYEDE

The origin of this town is mysterious. The Ayede were definitely the followers of Esukolo, who was the avowed enemy of the Ilorins. He escaped to Omu and died at Ijelu where he was deified.

Esubiyi succeeded Esukole as previously narrated. After the death of Esukolo nothing was sent to Ibadan for a very long time by Esubiyi. At that time Ibadan was virtually the overlord of North Ekiti. Moreover Ayede occupied Itaji land, but Itaji could do nothing about it. Itaji was then recently scattered by the Ilorins, who in an attempt to capture Esukolo did not spare the towns in Ekiti North. The Ibadans planned to attack Ayede.

Meanwhile Esubiyi built up his camp and fortified it. The Ibadans came straight to Ekiti, encamped at Iyapa Ayetoro and attacked Ayede. Esubiyi escaped to Omu. But the natural fortification of Omu was no barrier to Ibadan as it was to Ilorin. Esubiyi was captured but was not handed over to Ilorin. Hundreds of the people of Omu, Itapaji and Itaji were taken slaves to Ilorin and Ibadan. When they were released only few of them returned. The rest settled permanently at Ilorin and Ibadan. The few who returned made the language of the three towns sound like those of Ilorins and Ibadan. Today most of their customs are carbon copy of Ilorin and Ibadan. Their drums are gangan and dundun.

When tribal wars were over, Ayede was joined by escapees from Yagba area and had no trouble in finding friends in Lagos and Ibadan. Since she had no land, her people found useful employment in first world war (1914-1918). When Christianity was introduced to Ekiti, Ayede was foremost in establishing a school at Ayede. Her school served the whole of Egbe-Oba for years.

Ayede borrowed a lot from Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin. The Oba of Ayede is named "Ata". whether this tittle was borrowed from Okene or not, no one can tell but Ata is a nickname used to describe a very big stream. The whole expression is "Ata-Olu-Odo, agbona kankan" (Ata, the lord of rivers, completely blocking roads). The figure is a description of a strong man.

A question mark hangs on whether Ata was one of the original sixteen Ekiti Obas. The original sixteen Obas shifted from day to day. After Ekiti Parapo War, the Ekiti Obas spoke with reserve.

No one can tell the size of Aiyede when it was occupied by Esubiyi. Ekitis are always silent on such matters. There is a legend

that a daughter of Odudua was given a Crown and she travelled to Iye and settled there. Esubiyi could be a descendant of the woman.

Ata's name appeared in the service list of Ekiti Obas drawn up in 1909 and also in the list given by Johnson. What is more Ata is one of the sixteen Ekiti obas recognised by Government.

4 ISHAN – EKITI

(I) Ishan is one of the sixteen Kingdoms. It was originally made up of seven towns which were later on reduced to villages by wars. After the tribal wars, the villages came together to form the present Ishan town. Each village is now a quarter in the town. Ishan maintained that Ayede settled on part of their land.

As I have said above Ishan is made up of seven quarters. They are:- 1. Okesan 2. Igbomoji 3. Adisa 4. Ogilolo, 5. Irefin 6. Ilale and 7. Ilusajumu.

(II) *Historical Legend.*

The Onishan left Ife and after roaming about for a long time settled at the present site. The name of the Oba who brought the people from Ife was unknown because Ishan was three times sacked and each time was a complete break from the past since those taken slaves never returned to head the affairs of the people.

(III) *Government:*

Each of the seven quarters has its own constitution. But when it is a question of the town as a whole, the Onishan is assisted by the Emelu to form the supreme Council of Ishan. Religion however plays a dominant part in the government of Ishan. Even the king-makers are a religious body. namely: Aoro Onishan, who performs the traditional rites of installation of the Onishan; Baapo, Ejio Olua and Ejio Alarua.

Some of the duties of Agba Ilu and Elegbe in other places, are performed by the council of Iworos (Idol priests) under the presidency of Aworo Onishan.

The following Onishans were mentioned:- (1) Oba Oluasua. He was the first on the list of Onishans but it was not known whether

he was one who brought the people from Ife. He was from Ilomi Ruling House (2) Oba Igbarubioya who appeared to have succeeded Oba Oluasua was from the same House as Oluasua. Why? The answer is not immediately known. (3) Oba Aladegbayi was the first on Odowa list of Obas. He was succeeded by Oba Adesua who was from Ilomi Ruling House. The fifth known Oba was Adegbokun Okunlade. He was from Odowa Ruling House. He was followed by Oba Adeusi from Ilomi Ruling House. The next Oba from Odowa Ruling House was Oyewo. He was on the throne when Europeans came. He went to Lagos on the 6th of November 1903 and returned on the 16th of November the same year. As I have said above, many Ishans were in Lagos. They should be visited to draw them home. The Father of Mr. Da Silva was mentioned as being an Ishan taken slave to Lagos. Oba Oyewo was in constant touch with the Da Silvas, a big family in Lagos. He even had his children educated by them. He successfully resisted Taxation in 1920. He reigned for 36 years and died in 1928. The Native Court ordinance was introduced into Ishan during his reign. He was succeeded by Oba Adebiyi. He was from Ilomi Ruling House. Under him Ishan was forced to pay Tax. As a result of this, the following villages left Ishan, Obo, Asapa and Ora.

Ekiti-Parapo War; Ishan sent a contingent of 100 men under the Balogun Afogbangba.

(*IV*) *Wars*

At first Ishan settled down peacefully to farming but the 19th century tribal wars shook Ishan to her foundation. She was first attacked and sacked by Ibadan and then by Ilorin under Ali in 1845 and finally by Ibadan under Ajayi Ogboriefon in 1875. Thousands of the population were taken to Ibadan and to Ilorin.

The effects of this was the early contacts, Ishan had with Islam, Christianity and Christian Education but when the people regained their liberty most of them relapsed into paganism and are heavily inclined to fetishism. Most of the educated are abroad. They have property abroad and no job at home.

(*V*) *The Onishans*

Few of the Onishans were remembered. The people could not even tell whether the few remembered were those connected

with the wars. They did not appear to have been from the beginning. The fact that they were divided into Ruling Houses was a clear proof of this.

In fetish society, the Aworos were often more influential than the Obas. While the Aworos paraded themselves, it was taboo for the Obas to appear in the street. He was a kind of Semi god.

The achievement of these Obas was maintainance of peace. This consisted of worshipping the local-gods consistently. Their dream was that as long as the gods were not hungry they would not be angry, the life of the people would be spared.

5 IKERE

Ikere kingdom was for many years the colony of Benin. Although there was only bush paths between Ekiti and Benin, Ikere enjoyed a fair amount of confidential communication and she was proud of the colonialism. Moreover the brow of Olosunta was adorned with monkeys which moved freely not in Olosunta forest only but also in the streets of Ikere. They were sacred to Olosunta. It was therefore taboo to kill them.

The Ogoga is the leading Oba of Ikere kingdom. The account of how he became the Oba over and above the Olukere has been narrated in previous sections. On the list of Ogogas, the first name that came up was Agenelola. He was believed to have died in 1841 and was succeeded by Oba Akaiyejo I. During Akaiyejo's reign, Ibadan attacked Ekiti. He died in 1876, and was followed by Ogbenuote, whose reign intensified the bitterness between Ado and Ikere. He died in 1893, vacating the stool for Abosoro who had the good fortune of seeing the whiteman proclaim the peace initiated at Kiriji. Christianity and Islam came to Ikere during his reign. Abosoro was succeeded by Alowolodu I in 1921. During this reign, Churches sprang up in every nook and corner of Ikere. And loyalty was divided between God and Olosunta, the "Orun Ikere". Many Schools were built and scouting was introduced to Ikere. Alowolodu's route to pelupelu was always lined by Ikere scouts. At that time Ikere was in about nine settlements separated by thick bush. In 1927, the son of Mr. Daniel Ariyo was declared missing. The Oba and the chiefs were punished by Captain Pullen who also declared "Operation Clear the Bushes", but Oke Ikere remained separated from Odo-Oja till about 1950.

6. OYE AREA

In 1815, when the Benins were on their way to help Otun against Aaye, they attacked Oye but not much was done because Oye was then in about five scattered settlements. To attack one of them was to give warning to others to take to their heels. Thirty years later. 1845, the Oloye. Aje, invited Ali Balogun of Ilorin to help him to punish Egosi (Ilupeju). Ali honoured the invitation, and took Egosi within three months, but he also sacked Oye and took Aje prisoner in Ilorin camp at Ifaki. While Aje was a prisoner, he also persuaded Ali to destroy Ire because Ire did not help Oye against Ilorin. At the time, Ire was next door to Oye Ali was no longer interested because he had difficulty in facing Egosi and Ire.

Edugbe coup D'ETAT

The Oloye named Edugbe tried to force the Oyes to attack Egosi. They refused and murdered him (Edugbe) whom they regarded a usurper having succeeded Aje his brother without the will of the people (Intel. Rep. by Weir page 19 no 36.).

Ibadan War.

Ibadan attacked Egosi (Ilupeju) but Ire came to her aid and resisted Ibadan effectively. Two years later Ekiti Parapo War broke out and Oye sent a contingent under the Olugbosun of Ilupeju.

In 1905, a riot occured at Oye as a protest against Ogboni society. The cause was unknown but the British Government was not interested in Ogboni Society. Anywhere they could get any one who could be instrumental in getting rid of the society, they were determined to give the go ahead. In all probability, the excesses of the Society could have provoked the riot.

In 1918, the Oloye Adugbole was fined £20 (₦40.00) for extortion. He died in the same year and a dispute arose ove a successor. The Elegbe and Oye chiefs sponsored one candidate whom they installed without delay. Their action was improper because although the British Government laid down no rule they would want to be consulted at least as from 1913, about appointments of chiefs in Ekiti.

The District Officer, Mr. J. H. Findlay intervened and decided that the candidate selected by the Elegbe and Oye chiefs was improperly chosen. Mr. Owoyomi was installed. Owoyomi soon proved himself inefficient. In 1922, his salary was reduced from £189 to £150, for maladministration and in 1923, he was suspended from his position as president of Oye Native Court for taking bribes. His salary was restored in 1927, and in 1928, he was reinstated as president of the Native Administration Court but the same year, 1928, he was again suspended for six months. He died in 1932 and was succeeded by Adeoba and more troubles arose.

7. AKURE

"Akure is one of the sixteen Kingdoms of the Ekiti Division and a Native Administration which is part of the Ondo province created in 1915."

Akure legend maintained that the first Deji who led the people out of Ife was named variously: at one time he was called Omo-Ekun, being the posthmous son of Ekun. Then Ajapada (i.e. one who kills a rat with a rattle). He was also called Asode Boyede (i.e. the hunter who came from Oye)[1]. He took the title of "Deji", abreviation of "Ade-nji" (a crown is given).

The first Deji – Asode Boyede left Ife during the reign of Odudua and settled first at Osu near Ilesa where he spent six months and left there for Igbo Oye between Efon and Aramoko. He was three years there and then set out for the present site – Igbo Alakure a place close to the present site of Akure.

The term Akure has also received various interpretation. To some, according to Mr. N.A. Weir, Akure means "Nigbati eniyan ba ku odi ore awon ilu"[2]. (i.e. the people speak better of you after death than during your life time). Mr. Arifalo is of the view that Akure means "Oku kii bani se ore awon ilu" (when one died, he must not be a friend of the living).

The Deji, Adesida I, who was highly respected for his deep sense of commonsence maintained that Akure means – "Akunre". (beads cut). He said that the first Deji was a hunter and while

1. S.O. Arifalo page 5.
2. Akure Intelligence Report 1934, by N.A.C. Weir page 18.

he was hunting in Igbo Alakure his beads cut and when later on he put up his building there he called the place "Akun-re". This interpretation is becoming more popular than the others.

Akure Kingdom was small consisting of Akure the mother town, Ilara, Igbara-Oke, Ita-Ogbolu, Ijare and Iju. But three factors contributed in no small degree to her population increase:-

1. The Government Secretariat for Ondo province which brought in Officials, most of whom have buildings there.
2. The main road connecting Asaba with Lagos built in 1906, passed through Akure and thus facilitated trade and
3. The long and fruitful reign of Adesida I. Around 1900, he ordered those loitering around to go to their farms and he lived to see the order obeyed. That gave rise to numerous farm settlements. Some of them are: Ogbese, Ago-panu, Alayere and Apomu. Some of them have developed into villages.

Akure kingdom is ruled by the Deji popularly known in the olden days as (Ajampada of Johnson)[1]. Johnson called.

1. Samuel Johnson: History of the Yoruba, page 7.

Chapter Eleven

CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND SCHOOLS 1900—1939

Explorers and Missionaries began work in Nigeria in the same period but their origin and purpose differ like two parallel lines that can never meet. The ordinary man in the street however, associated exploration with Christianity. When in 1915, the people of Otun refused to pay tax, they destroyed the houses of chiefs believed to be responsible for collecting taxes and also destroyed Otun C.M.S. Church and school where those who wrote down the names of tax payers were trained.

The major forms of Chritianity in Ekiti at that period 1900-1939, were:

(*a*) Church Missionary Society, popularly known as C.M.S. 1895.

(*b*) Catholic Mission 1912.

(*c*) Methodist 1910.

(*d*) Baptist 1915 and

(*e*) Seventh Day Adventist 1922.

The approach of these Religious bodies to the people and the maintenance of their churches show no remarkable differences. "There were some important differences between the different societies. Each Mission tended to emphasize how much it differred from all others, but it is possible to exaggerate these denominational differences. From the point of view of Nigerians what they had in common was far more impressive."- Prof. Ade Ajayi.

(*a*) *Propagation;*

It is difficult to tell when Christianity came to Ekiti. All dates given were official dates. No Europeans came directly to preach Christianity to Ekiti. The Ekitis who served as slaves or labourers in Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan and Ijebu were the first to embrace Christianity.

Persecution:

As Mr. Babamuboni moved from place to place many of Atoyobos (as ex-slaves were called) all over Ekiti who were hi in their respective towns began to make their appearance. U was foremost in this, but the Christians at Ushi forbade drumm on Sundays; that angered the pagans who with the consent of Olojido early one sunday morning, surrounded the Anglican pl of worship at Ushi, set the Church on fire and those who tried escape through the windows were cut to pieces. About elev were thus killed.

At Ikogosi, eight Baptists were driven out of the town. Th ran to Ado Ekiti, where two of them died. The rest returned Ikogosi to carry on.

There were quarrels here and there owing to excesses of th Christians themselves. At Igede for instance, effort was made t prevent masquerades passing through the Church compoun and that led to a quarrel which was settled by the Ewi. In som places the Christians move about at night when pagan festival were on, that would normally lead to quarrels.

At Osin-Ikole, a group of Christians attacked the pagan places of worship and destroyed them proclaiming the victory of Christ over the devil. In this, they were probably inspired by the action of Gideon who destroyed the altar and sacred grove of Baal. (Judges 6, 25.) Traditional worshippers in Egbe-Oba retaliated but the District Officer set up an enquiry and gave judgement in 1915 and imprisoned the guilty ones.

At other time, traditional worshippers acted arbitrarily. For instance, the Christians at Otun were flogged during the Egungun festival in 1936. Mr. George Abiodun who was the community leader of the Catholics had his house and properties destroyed. The District Officer had to step in and demanded compensation. But then the Oore was acting under the influence of Ilorin. Ordinarily no Ekiti Oba had such courage. The only exception was the Ogoga of Ikere, Oba Olowolodu who, around 1891 unnecessarily persecuted the Christians of his days. Mr. Abraham Oloye, for instance, was fined nine goats because he put on a helmet. Mr. David Adaramola was mercilessly beaten for using an umbrella and the umbrella was seized and fined nine goats. Women were

not left out of the show; Madam Mary Ajiro was rough handled and fined nine pigs because she wore buba.[1]

In 1933, however, Capt. Weir who was A.D.O. at Ado Ekiti remarked: Paganism is declining in this area (Ekiti), and Christianity is increasing rapidly and surely. The greatest tolerance has been shown towards Christianity and Mohammedanism chiefly because they were introduced by their own country men"[2] The A.D.O. was aware of the persecutions at Otun, Ikere etc. but they were minor compared with what obtained in other places.

The difficulties of the early Missionaries:

1. *Malaria Fever:* There was neither Quinine nor any other medicine in Ekiti at the time, no Dispensary not to talk of Hospital. Rev. Harding died, a few months of his arrival at Ado, District Officers visiting or staying in Ekiti were better protected. The link between them and Lagos was easy. Government messengers formed the link. Missionaries did not enjoy such facility.

2. *Lack of good roads:* There were bush paths often obstructed by felling trees. In case of illness hammock could be used. In most cases, cycling was very difficult. As from 1912, certain places could be reached by cycling.

3. *Carriers:* Since there were no roads, carriers were obligatory; very often the christians who were expected to carry the loads were reluctant to do so and pastors had no police constables to enforce their rights. They relied on persuasion which was effective but slow. The Anglicans and other soon rid themselves of this difficulty by greatly reducing the number of Europeans in their services. As from about 1929, good motor cycles and cars were freely used.

(*f*) *Maintenance:*

The Christians in Ekiti whether Catholic or Protestants were responsible for the building of their churches according to number and ability. The first Emmanuel Church at Ado was built by all the people in Ado Ekiti. It was formally opened on March 16 1896, and rebuilt in 1915 by all Ekiti C.M.S. Community. The

1. Annals of St. Luke Church, Ikere Ekiti.
2. Intelligence Report, on Ado, page 7.

Methodist were divided into circuits C.B.A. throughout the period under review, 1900-1939. Ekiti was in circuit "C" where all expenses were the responsibility of the Mother Church. The American Baptist Churches in Ekiti were maintained by the Mother Church. Dito for 7th Day Adventist.

(*g*) *Personnel:*

Anglican Catechists were at first the responsibility of the C.M. Society but as time went on the C.M.S. community were able to look after their own Catechists, housed them and paid their salaries. The Society, however, continued to maintain the pastors and other personnel who were not Europeans.

Catholics were expected to maintain their priests, white or black. The priests were few and scattered. They were neither married nor salaried. It was easy to care for them. The Catholic community often fell short of the expectation. Help in the form of flour, cereals, Bacon, Cheese, tinned food etc. at first came from Europe. But during the first World War 1914 — 1918, it was difficult to get such help. Chickens, however, were cheap and roasted plantains were as good as bread. Bush meat was available in great quantity. The Catechists were paid from the contributions of the faithful.

(*h*) *Doctrine:*

All protestants have a common doctrine—The Bible. Their members were expected to know the Our Father, the Ten Commandments and to be able to read the Bible before they were initiated. The Catholics on the other hand insisted on knowing the summary of the Bible which was contained in the Catechism. In addition the Catholic authorities expected the adherents to renounce every kind of superstitious beliefs and to be clear on the nature of Christian Marriage—Monogamy and inseparability of valid Marriage. Protestants were also strict on Chritian Marriage but later on they appeared to be defeated and the defection became contagious.

The Seventh Day Adventist came to Otun in 1922, they differ from the others in this that they have their Sundays on Saturdays.

(*i*) *Cathechist*

Most of the early Catechists were trained abroad and were not natives of Ekiti, but in course of time some began training in Ekiti e.g. The Catholic Church started training at Ado-Ekiti in 1918.

(*j*) *Mission House*

As a rule in Ekiti, every Church had a Mission—House attached to it. This was the place where the Catechist, his wife and children were housed. "Teacher's house adds prestige to the Mission, makes a Catechist independent, wins for him respect and gives him privacy." History of the Catholic Church in Ondo Diocese, Page 83.

The early Missionaries built their houses and Churches away from the people. In this they shared the views of their fellow Europeans—The District Officers and the merchants European agents.

Muslim leaders, being Africans considered more the convenience of the people than their own and built their Mosques at the fringe of a market. Churches and Mission Houses which are today surrounded by buildings were not originally so. They were for years away from the people. It was a kind of Reservation. The idea was not for the purpose of expansion, that was secondary. It was for health reasons because at that time Europeans believed that Malaria fever was due to contermination. If you inhale the breath of the natives, you might be a victim of malaria fever. Even if their sweat touches you, you might regret. The Mission House did not house the non-white, not because of noice making but because of health.

Emmanuel Church at Ado was built near the Reservation. It took some courage to cross the Orojuda into it. The first Catholic Church at Ado was also built away from the people. When it was rebuilt common sense prevailed, and was rebuilt at Agere nearer to the people. Every where in Ekiti the Mosque is located in an easily accessible place.

(*k*) *Christmas Celebrations*

Ekiti always celebrated Christmas quietly. A certain drum, called Gombe was first used. You sit on it and bit it with both hands and the heel of the right leg and everybody

danced. Ekiti never adopted the Lagos method of celebrating Xmas where one group of Christians fought another. It is hard to forget the meeting at Olowogbowo, on Christmas eve, In Ekiti, the children were conscious of going to farm as soon as the festivity was over. Every thing was done normally.

(*l*) *Christian Marriage*

A Christian Marriage is a stable union of husband and wife for the purpose of procreation and mutual help. Christians, Muslims and those who profess traditional religion believed in a stable marriage but when in about 1916, Divorce was introduced into Ekiti, worse complications set in. It became extremely difficult to tell which was natural marriage as women moved freely from one husband to another. Moreover it was no easy task for missionaries to get the Government to recognise natural marriage, so that seducing such a married woman and refunding the dowry might be illegal. The adherents were given sufficient warning against indiscriminate seducing of women. They were carefully instructed regarding their selection of partners.

The first difficulty which confronted the early Missionaries was how to get suitable partners for their workers–Catechists and Pastors. The Anglicans had a training institution at Akure, the catholics at Ibadan and Topo.

Some other factors militated against Christian marriage, namely:

(1) *Ekiti family set up*. Christian Marriage has two ends, namely, procreation and mutual help. Native marriage acknowledges only one-procreation. If therefore a Christian married and his wife has no issue or has only one or two his relatives might get him another woman or get the married woman out of the house.

(2) Christian marriage is personal, native marriage is not personal. All the relations of the husband and wife are always involved.

(3) The early Missionaries were white. In about 1921, Europe began to lose their respect for Christian Religion, District Officers who were also white began to behave after a fashion. Their lives were scandalous.

(4) As from 1931, Christianity gradually became commercialised. At the instance of prophet Babalola, many "Oshomaalos" burnt their counters and became "Pastors". Without any recognised training or acknowledged doctrine.

II. SCHOOL EDUCATION IN EKITI

Introduction:

Ekiti is an *agricultural* area. At first the benefits of school education did not appear to many with any degree of cogency. After a long persuasion, a farmer having two or three wives might send one child of each wife to school.

The Missionaries, on the other hand built schools and begged for children in order to secure personnel for teaching religion. Religious teachers must know how to read and write at least their own language. Only those who were interested in such jobs developed a taste for learning. The rest often ran back to farms. Very few farmers would like to deprive themselves of invaluable contribution of their children to their farms because of religion. Between 1920 and 1930, Divorce began to be the rule not exception. Girls began to go to school. School enrolment rose phenomenally.

All Ekiti towns and villages except Ire-Ekiti had one kind of school or the other attached to or kept in the Church.

The First Schools in Ekiti:

With the assistance of Ajimudaoro (Aladesanmi I) of Ado Ekiti, the whole town of Ado Ekiti rose as one man to build a thatched roofed school/church at Ado, (Emmanuel). It was formally opened on March 16 1896.

Mr Showumi and Babamuboni then approached Ajimudaoro for children. Every chief was ordered to give them children. The order was obeyed. Akogun, Irona gave Falade, Odofin sent Aladeloye, Oso Ajelere came from Baisaya and Alarierin gave Ogunrinde and Aladejuyigbe. All the other chiefs follow suit. The school was soon packed full.

In every country, women play an important role in the education of their children; wherever that role is overlooked or neglected, success is always very small. Many Ekiti mothers surely dreaded their children being handled to foreigners. As far as Ados were concerned both Showumi and Babamuboni were strangers. Children at the advice of their mothers began to drop off one by one.

The Log Book of Emmanuel school opened with these words: Emmanuel School Ado Ekiti was established in 1901" This expression should mean that the school was established in its own building

in 1901, and began to be run under a qualified teacher. From 1901 to 1915, every nerve was strained to increase the enrolment. The children however continued to run away. The few remaining were elderly wild, rude and uncontrollable. The last of the trained teachers, Mr. Adeniran was transferred to Akure "because the children were too few", Mr. Babamuboni once more occupied the chair. He remarked: I have seven pupils. They were wild and quarrelsome. They beat one another. They were noisy and would not listen to my teaching. How could they learn when they would not listen? One of them, Oluyemi (later on Rev. Oluyemi) replied: 'Opa ni ko mu a no a' (flog us).

The school, however, was a success. There were about seven who persevered. Among them were S.P. Adeyinka (the late Canon Adeyinka the late Rev. Oluyemi and the late Mr. Ogunrinde and others. In those days, a student's chief ambition was to be a Lay-reader or a catechist or a Pastor. Anglican pupils graduated in St. Andrew's Oyo and Catholic in Oke Are, Ibadan.

The schools at Akure, Otun, Ifaki, Ayede, Ushi, Ise, Ijero, Efon etc. seemed to catch on very quickly but in 1915, Otun, in her rebellion against paying taxation destroyed the C.M.S. flourishing school. Ayede School served all Ayede, Isan and Egbe Oba for a time.

Ushi

Ushi parents reported to the District Officer that the christians in general and Mr. Elija Oke in particular, prevented their children from going to farm. The D.O. intervened promptly and ordered the children to go to school three times a week–Monday to Wednesday and to go to farm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. In those days, the D.O.'s words were a law. The parents had to abide by the decision. The parents soon forgot their objection, and children went to school normally.

Akure

In 1915, when Akure became the Headquarters of Ondo Province, a Government school was to be opened there but it was removed to *Owo*. Ekiti was thus completely free of Government schools, where in addition to reading and writing, Natural religion should have been the tone of the school.

Ijero

Ijero has had a long connection with Lagos. Through that connection the C.M.S. form of religion came to Ijero. Mrs. Doherty was a major instrument in the spread of religion in the area. She founded at Waasimi (Ijero) St. George's school, which pludded away at its lessons with the encouragement of Lagos. Around 1897, there were about 24 children in the school.

Ado Ekiti

Emmanuel School continued to register progress. In 1916, the school opened with 61 children. The following year, 1917 the school, under Mr. J.K. Adeyinka, reopened with 80 pupils, and closed in December with 113.

In this same year, a rival school was built at *Agere*. It was named St. George's. It was for the Catholics in Ekiti. There was no Government regulation or control, no condition of service for teachers, and no scale of salaries. The Missionaries acted freely and as best as they could. As a matter of fact, the intention of opening schools was not academic, it was to train personnel for *religion.*

Experience showed that conversion through schools was easier, faster and more permanent. The children developed a true idea of God and of life during the formative years.

By 1920, almost every church had a number of school children. A school then must have at least *T E N* children. Few churches had separate buildings for schools. Churches, in most cases were used as schools. Rev. Jebb refused Emmanuel Church to be used for school. His reason was clear. If children were free to make noise in a place from Monday to Friday, it should be a waste of time to stop them on Sunday.

In 1926, the Catholic Catechist at Ilawe was transferred because, as Fr. Laugel put it, "His handwriting was bad and his education low".

An average intelligent child had to spend ten years in school. The period was divided as follows:

Two years for Elementary	I & II	(Yoruba)
Two years for Primers	I & II	(English)
Six years for Standards	I to VI	(English)

About 1929, the school Curriculum was changed and reduced to eight years:

Classes	I & II	(Yoruba)	2yrs
Standards	I to VI	(English)	6yrs

At the tail end of that year, 1929, Archdeacon Dallimore arrived in Ekiti, from St. Andrew's, Oyo. He was God sent as far as schools were concerned. He was an excellent educationist. His first effort was to pick a few good finalists in Emmanuel school and train them for a few weeks and send them out to important C.M.S. schools. As model pupil teachers. The system was most encouraging and helped to raise the standard and efficiency of C.M.S. schools, of the ten finalists coached, seven were successful, but owing to financial difficulties, he could not continue.

To combat the difficulties created by the slump in trade, Archdeacon Dallimore closed down Standard V & VI in C. M. S. schools and brought the children to Ado. St. George's Ado had already been made a Central school for Ekiti.

In 1932, St. George's, was placed on Assisted list of schools. Many Anglican schools had been so placed since 1920.

Progress:

From now on, Archdeacon Dallimore began with all seriousness the scheme for which he was transferred to Ekiti. His activities regarding education completely dominated the field. He got C.M.S. community to open schools in towns, villages and farm settlements. Other denominations, unwilling to be left behind joined in the race. As a matter of fact, 1932, was a year of *educational rebirth* in Ekiti.

In December 1932, Archdeacon Dallimore collected, selected pupils from all the C.M.S. Standard IV schools in Ekiti, tested them, and grouped the best of them into a class. On 23rd May, 1933, the school was formally and ceremoniously opened. Two years later, both Ekiti Central School and St. George's ran Standard VI courses. Standard VI pupils were needed for the expansion of schools in Ekiti since trained teachers were as yet very few. The idea of Archdeacon Dallimore was more of a comprehensive school than anything else. There were two sides to the school: *Academic*, here the students took all the subjects usually taken in all Primary Schools.

Crafts:

Unlike other Primary schools, the students paid special attention to Carpentary, Brickmaking, Building, Plastering and Tailoring.

ENTRANCE TO THE AWORO'S SPECIAL PLACE

Chapter Twelve

BUILDING OF ROADS — 1912 (Stage one)

Ekitis had no car, no bicycle and no horse. They trekked to farm and back daily. They nevertheless approciated the value of good roads. Every town or village or farm settlement was properly organised for keeping the paths clean. The paths were very rough and rugged. The Commissioner or the District Officers were carried in hammock which was not an easy way of conveying a person. At that time, from a distance the onlooker would think the white man was enjoying life all the way, particularly seeing him smoking conveniently. But since the hammock was swinging to and fro like the pendulum of a clock it was indeed tiresome being carried in it. A horse should have been a good substitute but the life of a horse in Ekiti was very short — two to three months. Moreover horses were not easy to ride in rugged places. The only alternative was to build good roads.

In 1912, a road suitable for cycling was built across Ekiti from Igbara-Oke to Otun boundary by communal labour. At that time, bridges were built with felled palm trees or large trunks of trees felled across the river. The bridges were dangerous in case of a flood. River banks easily gave way for lack of concrete support. Cement was not seen in Ekiti until about 1920.

The death of Olajolumo — 1912

In the third year of the reign of Adewumi, he celebrated the feast of the Ifa Oracle and invited all the Babalawos - (Ifa priests). The Babalawos were to tell the Ewi what the Ifa wanted. Every one of them prescribed a goat or a sheep but Olajolumo pretending to be wiser than the rest maintained that a tailless, two legged animal must be offered in sacrifice. It became widely known that he suffered the penalty through death.

The death of Olajolumo was reported to the Government and the Government was terribly annoyed because this was the second time that such news was brought up. Firstly, during the time of Ajimudaoro, an Oyo trader was murdered near Amu - on the way

to Ijan, secondly, another murder was committed by the death of Olajolumo. Soldiers were sent to Ado. At the approach of the soldiers all the young male and female escaped to Are and remained there for three days. All the forests around Ado town were searched but no trace of the body of Olajolumo was found. The Government blamed the Ewi but the then Baisaya defended him that the Ewi knew nothing about the death of Olajolumo.

As a result of the death of Olajolumo, the Ewi no longer had the courage of confronting the British Government even when things were done against his wish. Soon after, a District Officer in the person of Mr. G.E.H. Humphrey, was appointed to Ado.

From January 1st 1913, to July 1915, Ekiti formed part of Ijebu province. Ondo province was then created and the Native Courts Ordinance was applied to Ekiti Division in June, 1915.

EKITI MUSIC

Before the arrival of the Obas, Ekiti music consisted mainly of folklore and moonlight songs. The evening meal was usually taken at about 4 to 6 p.m. Ekiti never ate later than 6 p.m. "Ajeun oru ko jasan, a baka amutoto lobe" (if you eat in the dark, you eat some insects). After that, farmers who had been through a hard day's work, retired to bed. On the other hand women who would still want to do some spinning or weaving would welcome a crowd of children around them to sing folk songs.

Sometimes a person versed in folk music would be invited to sing the solo and the children formed the chorus. The folk music was interjected with folk Tales which were very instructive and interesting. Women were thus kept awake to spin or weave cloths for a long time, at times as late as 11p.m. Moonlight songs were rendered periodically. They lasted about ten days every month. They were accompanied with dances and wrestling. Both folk and moonlight songs were forbidden if the town or village suffered from small-pox (Olode) or other infectious illnesses. They were also tabooed during the day.

At the arrival of the Obas, Ekiti music took a formal turn and might be classified into religious and social. For many years, social music was tabooed except at burials. Even at burials music was forbidden if there was small-pox in the town or village or

if the deceased was under fifty years old. The reason was psychological.

The disease was contagious. It was not easy to prevent the sufferers from mixing freely with others particularly when they were recovering.

Every object of worship had music peculiar to it. Such music was forbidden outside the period of the worship. Consequently, only those who were by nature expert in music would remember how to handle the situation since there was scarcely any room for practice.

Some of those religious music were semi-religious and semi-social. Examples included Ogun music at Ijero, Alile at Ise and Okorobo at Ifaki. By their very nature they were mainly social, but since they were confined to a particular period and tabooed at other times, they should be said to be also religious.

Social:

Over the years, whenever town roads were to be cleared the workers used to be accompanied with drums. But when the British commissioner was appointed to Oke-Imo in 1899, Ekiti groups were sent in turns to clear bush at Oke-Imo, they always beat the bembe drums accompanied by Sekere and also by singing. It was certain that after their return from Oke-Imo, social dances continued. Thus a break with the past was effected.

Besides, in Ekiti Palace some forms of music recounted the names of the preceeding Obas. This was done mainly by Palace women on certain feast days who also beat agere drums, common to all Ekiti Palaces.

As from about 1910, Social music became more popular except when there was small-pox in the area.

Christians and Muslims who were interested in music broke the myth and began to form musical societies. Thus Egbe Oregele, Egbe Ijebu, Egbe Ajabúrẹ̀, Egbe Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀, among others, were formed . Mr. Aluko Aruwele is still the exponent of Egbe Sekere Mr. Osewa of Iyin carried out evangelisation with Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ music in about 1896. Egbe Ijebu had a deep root in Oye, Ire and Arigidi. Hence the expression: Ijebu ku l'Arigidi, o dele Oye po siri" (Ijebu drum was sounded at Arigidi and was not heard at Oye) Ijebu is supposed to be the drum of the nobles. Hence the saying

"Ule olomo loya l'Ijebu ti ndun" (Ijebu drum is heard in rich man's House) Ijebu has now been developed into various forms including the latest form which is "Ogbele". Ijebu differs from Ogbele in that Ijebu has Iya-Ilu (base drum) made of a big pot with a very deep sound. It is not easy to carry it about. All the pots used for Ogbele are small in size and are portable. Ogbele also has Sekere as an accompaniment.

One of the best dancers of Ijebu was Alakutu of Ifaki, a rich woman of an uncommon ability and intelligence. She died around 1928. Ijebu is also a speciality of Iyapa (Ayetoro). Iyapa dance was notably artistic. Ijebu music is always used for Orisala and Epa celebrations.

Instrumental music was few and was the speciality of the young. The only example is the music produced by the Afonyo at Ado-Ekiti. The best of them was "O ku na, o sina". It was used in a play of hide and seek.

Hunters have a special music. The dance was more like that of a wild beast. As a matter of fact, hunters when dancing very often imitated animals and the chase.

Music Instruments:

The earliest Ekiti musical instruments were Oye (Oluta) "Orisa ni isona Ekun, omo araye ni gbe'nu Oye" (what is natural to a Tiger is attificial to a buggle.) Iwo (horns) Agere, Sekere, Bembe, Pagege, Ijebu and Ipe and Apoporo etc. Agere is used in all Aafin festivals and the burial of an important Omo-Owa. Ipe is a king of gourd, a long tube often with two holes. It was got during the season for fresh corn and new yam, and used freely at that particular period, outside of which the sound denoted the presence of danger such as fire and war. All the other instruments were used during one religious festival or other. Bembe was used for public work. It was introduced from Igbo Akoko. When beaten in the morning, it is a call to one type of duty or another. It might be that some bush paths were to be cleared, or the house of the Baale was blown off, and it was to be repaired immediately.

Pagege:

This instrument is made of a hollow iron conical in shape. It is struck with a piece of wood. If heard outside the Egungun

The inhabi
its sounding. A person has nobody
announcement.

Musicians:

The original musicians in Ekiti were mostly the Egungun (masqueraders) and their followers.

Ekiti egunguns, praised and abused with impunity. Egungun're (Beautiful Egungun) was clothed with spotlessly white dress (Ala) "Aguntan mo ya mi je, me ro mo, aso ni mo ro" (Sheep don't bite me, I am not clothed in palm fronds but in cloths). Its speciality was music. Mr. Oso Akelekele seemed to have no equal in the art. He could sing and dance for days. Oso died in about 1923. He instituted Egungun sacred groves all over Ekiti, particularly Ado-Ekiti area. Some claimed that Oso was a native of Ode, others believed he hailed from Egbe, others maintained that he belonged to Imesi Lasigidi. It was lately discovered that Oso was born in a town called Ufimi, situated near the river Ose at the boundary of Akoko and Ekiti. Ufimi, was said to be cradle of Egungun Ẹdẹ and Egungun're. Apparently the people had no other job but Egungun. They travelled round Ekiti at least once a year during the Egungun festivals which varied from place to place but around July to September of each year. Oso in particular was not interested in farming; hence he stuck doggedly to the Egungun art.

The people of Ufimi must have relied on their incantation and defied the invaders from Nupe, Benin or Ibadan. Thus the town was completely wiped out. Their reminants formed a quarter at Egbe.

Ede:

Among those who sponsored this type of Egungun in its hey days were Abelemure at Agere quarter in Ado-Ekiti, Alamudu of Igbemo, Aladoko of Ise, Alaketu of Ijigbo quarter, Eisangan of Irona and Olutomi of Ojumose, all of Ado-Ekiti. The strange thing about these musicians was that they seemed to have lived

from hand to mouth, all their life. It was believed at their time that a musician could never become rich. The reason was that they were poorly remunerated for their services and the little they got was always spent on incantations and charms. The first to shake off the yoke of poverty was Mr. Akintola Olule who performed as the Adoko of Ise. He began to pay short visits to Lagos and used part of his earning each time to bring back bundles of Iron sheets. He was soon able to roof his building with iron sheets. That achievement broke the myth because to roof one's building with iron sheets was then an unmistakeable sign of wealth. It superseded in importance the number of wives a person had.

The most popular Ede was Alamudu of Igbemo. The quality of his voice was superb. He was never short of what to say and how to say it. He could keep his audience laughing for days. He died at Iyapa in 1942. His remains was brought back to Igbemo.

Chapter Thirteen

BRITISH RULE IN EKITI

The British Government seemed to have b
country of which Ekiti is a part was highl
pacified, could provide a strong political f
lopment of British commerce. In fact , Bri
talking about trade instead of governmen
emphasized giving advice rather than gover
Lagos was already a colony. "As from
was stationed there to watch over the in
and to check on the revival of the slave tr

If expansion of trade could be made
be sufficient. Everything possible was
the chiefs since they were normally co-o
Officials.

In 1893, the protectorate of Yoruba
signed at Ibadan. A commissioner was
Ekiti, with his seat at Oke-Imo (Ilesh
vision of Ekiti and Ijesha was intended
learnt to be diplomatic. The solid

LIST OF DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS & DISTRICT OFFICERS IN EKITI 1913-1933

(A) Lagos Government (Detachments)

	Name	*Force*	*Station*	*Date*
1.	Lieut. A.O.C. Scott	O.C.	House	Akure	Aug.	1897
2.	Lieut. L.N. Backoell	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1898
3.	Capt. E.L. Cowie	,,	,,	,,	July	1898
4.	,, H.V. Neal	,,	,,	,,	Jan.	1899
5.	F.P. Pinkett (Acting)	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1899
6.	Capt. H.V. Neal	,,	,,	,,	May.	1899
7.	Dr. T.E. Rice (Acting)	,,	,,	,,	Sept.	1899
8.	Capt. G. Anderson	,,	,,	,,	Oct.	1899
9.	Capt. J.E. Cochrane	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1900

Hausa Force was withdrawn 26th March 1900 when Akure station was taken over by Major W.R. Reeve Tucker.

(B) Lagos Government (North-East District)

	Name	*Title*	*Station*	*Date*
1.	Major W.R. Reeve Tuker Tycjer	Trav. Comm.	Oke-Imo (Ilesha)	Oct.	1899
2.	T. Sidney	,,	,,	,,	Apr.	1901
3.	Capt. W.G. Ambrose	,,	,,	,,	July.	1901
4.	Dr. W.B.G. Best	,,	,,	,,	Oct.	1902
5.	Capt. F.E. Werry	,,	,,	,,	Jan.	1903
6.	,, W.G. Ambrose	,,	,,	,,	June	1903
7.	,, F.E. Werry	,,	,,	,,	July	1904
8.	,, W.G. Ambrose	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1905

(C) Amalgamation of Lagos & Southern Nigeria.

Name	*Title*		*Station*	*Date*
1. Capt. W.G. Ambrose	Dist.	Comm.	Oke-Imo (Ilesha)	Jan. 1906
2. C.R. Palmer	,,	,,	,,	Apr. 1909
3. A.H. Blair	,,	,,	,,	Aug. 1906
4. D.E. Prince	,,	,,	,,	July. 1907
5. A.H. Blair	,,	,,	,,	Jan. 1909
6. J.M. Binney	,,	,,	,,	Jan. 1909
7. C. Patridge	,,	,,	,,	May. 1909
8. A.H. Blair	,,	,,	,,	June 1909
9. G.E.H. Humphrey	,,	,,	,,	June 1910
10. Villers	,,	,,	,,	Dec. 1910
11. A.W. Butterworth	,,	,,	,,	Nov. 1911
12. G. St. L. Hopkinson (Acting)	,,	,,	,,	Aug. 1912
13. W.G. Beanish	,,	,,	,,	Aug. 1912
14. G.E.H. Humphrey	,,	,,	,,	Jan. 1913

(D) Amalgamation of Northern & Southern Nigeria 1st Jan. 1914

Name	*Title*		*Station*	*Date*
1. G.E.H. Humphrey	Dist.	Officer	Ado-Ekiti	Jan. 1914
2. A.R.W. Livingstone (Acting)	,,	,,	,,	Feb. 1914
3. W.E. Hunt (Acting)	,,	,,	,,	Mar. 1915

(E) Ekiti Division transferred to Ondo Province 1st July 1915

Name	*Title*		*Station*	*Date*
4. A.R.W. Livingstone	Dist.	Officer	Ado-Ekiti	Sept. 1915
5. A.D.A.Macgregor	,,	,,	,,	Mar. 1917
6. A.W. Butterworth	Resident		Akure	July 1918
7. B.M. Carkeek (Acting)	Dist.	Officer	Ado-Ekiti	Nov. 1918
8. G.H. Findlay ,,	,,	,,	,,	Jan. 1920

9. J.H. Bodds	(Acting)	District	Officer	Ado-Ekiti	Jan.	1920
10. G.H. Findlay	,,	,,	,,	,,	Oct.	1920
11. J. Jackson	,,	,,	,,	,,	Oct.	1921
12. Mothe H.D. de la	,,	,,	,,	,,	Nov.	1921
13. J. Jackson	,,	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1922
14. G.H. Findlay	,,	,,	,,	,,	Apr.	1922
15. J. Jackson	,,	,,	,,	,,	June	1922
16. H. De B. Bewley	,,	,,	,,	,,	June	1922
17. A.P. Pullen	,,	,,	,,	,,	Feb.	1923
18. G.H. Findlay	,,	,,	,,	,,	Apr.	1924
19. A.P. Pullen	,,	,,	,,	,,	Sep.	1925
20. G.H. Findlay	,,	,,	,,	,,	Mar.	1923
21. W.J.W. Morott	,,	,,	,,	,,	June	1923
22. A.P. Pullen	,,	,,	,,	,,	Aug.	1924
23. E. Burcess	,,	,,	,,	,,	Jan.	1924

Name	*Title*	*Station*	*Date*
1. L.H. Boileau	Dist.	Officer Ado-Ekiti	1926
2. B.J.A. Mathew's	,,	,, ,,	1926
3. A.P. Pullen	,,	,, ,,	1926
4. B.M. Carkeek	,,	,, ,,	1928
5. T.B. Bovel Jones	,,	,, ,,	1928
6. A.P. Pullen	,,	,, ,,	1928
7. B.J.A. Mathew's	,,	,, ,,	1930
8. G.G. Haris	,,	,, ,,	1930
9. H.G.M. White	,,	,, ,,	1931
10. B.J.A. Mathew's	,,	,, ,,	1932
11. A.C.C. Swayne	,,	,, ,,	1932
12. E.N.F. George	,,	,, ,,	1934
13. A.C.C. Swayne	,,	,, ,,	1934
14. R.A. Vosper	,,	,, ,,	1936
15. G.G. Harris	,,	,, ,,	1936
16. T.B. Bovel Jones	,,	,, ,,	1936
17. R. Rankine	,,	,, ,,	1937
18. A.F. Abell	,,	,, ,,	1937
19. A.R.A. De Garston	,,	,, ,,	1937
20. R.B. Kerr	,,	,, ,,	1939
21. B.J.A. Mathew's	,,	,, ,,	1940
	,,	,, ,,	

The Seat of British Officials - 1913

Every effort had been made to make the Ewi the sole authority for Ekiti. With the seat of the District Officer at Ado, Ewi had his chance but this hope was finally shattered when in July 1915, Ekiti and Ondo came under the name "Ondo - province", Akure became its headquarters; and the main road to Benin passed through Akure. It was the turn of the Deji to look more important. Even then since Akure was at the extreme end of Ekiti, it could not vie for the headquarter of Ekiti which Ado retained. Akure was however easily the headquarter of Ondo Province because of its central location. Thus Residency, General Hospital and the Secretariat were sited at Akure. In one word, the centre of power was in Akure where the Resident was based.

The following instruction among other things was the usual guideline for Residents in Yoruba land;

(1) "Official etiquette and ceremonial are matters of great importance to African chiefs and are strictly enforced among themselves. No doubt the people narrowly observe the conduct of British officials in these matters and the prestige of a chief may consequently suffer, and a feeling of soreness and humiliation be engendered by a thoughtless and quite unintentional act. The assumption, moreover, of privileges by petty chiefs or office holders which they would not have dared to assume in old days tends to lower the dignity of the rulers whose sole right such privileges used to be, residents should therefore be careful to study Native etiquette, and to prohibit the assumption of privileges or dress by those not entitled to them by Native custom."[1]

European Quarters known as Reservation

The early Europeans in Nigeria believed that malaria fever was caused by contact with the natives. The breath or heat coming from the body of an African was believed capable of spreading the fever. Consequently white men had to live in a reservation (a special area carved out for their residence away from the natives). There were reservation at Akure and at Ado-Ekiti, and rest house was built by communal labour in each of the remaining important towns. The rest houses were also built in location far away from the people.

1. Lugard's memo, 28, 1918, p. 308

By 1914, rest houses were erected at Aramoko, Ido Ojojido, Ise, Isan, Ogotun, Oke-Mesi, Oye, Ilawe and Ikere. Before the building of rest houses, the District Officer used to sleep in a tent erected in a market or open place. He sometimes slept in a mosque.

The arrival of a District Officer, commonly called "Oyinbo-Agba" was always announced a few days in advance and the streets must be kept spotlessly clean. Women clubs (organisation) were responsible for sweeping the streets. On arrival, the white man's carriers would collect fowl and palmwine with impunity. Aladesanmi I in 1908, stopped the practice at Ado - Ekiti, but the collection of palm-wine continued until 1925.

School girl put a stop to the practice at Akure. She could speak a word of English and had the courage to approach the District Officer to complain that her mother's fowl was taken. The D.O. asked her whether the fowl was paid for; "No" She replied. An announcement was made, making it unlawful for any "Imaro"— (police) or cook steward to catch a fowl in the name of the District Officer without paying for it.

1st World War — 1914:

The British settled Ekiti fight with Ibadan. When in 1914 war broke out in Europe, as a token of gratitude many Ekitis eagerly enlisted as soldiers to defend their benefactors. Many of them did very well and contributed in no small degree to the progress of Ekiti, particularly in the field of education. An example was that of Mr. Olaloye of Ara Ikole (Oke Oniyo). They sent their children to school and encouraged their neighbours to do so. They told impressive stories of England, Germany, France and the other countries visited by them.

Introduction of Ayelujara (Kobo)

Before 1917, in Ekiti, the means of exchange among the poor was trade by barter, and among the rich cowries. When copper was introduced in 1917, the Ekitis believed that all the good things others far away had been enjoying had then come to Ekiti, hence the coin was called Aiyelujara (the veil over the world is removed). The use of copper made trading more convenient. It was light and

1. Lugard's memo, 28, 1918, p. 308

easily portable. While three copper pieces could be put in the pocket, a corresponding amount in cowries could be a heavy load. However, the introduction of coins raised the price of food stuff as much as twenty fold within a short time. Later other coins, three pence, six pence and one shilling were introduced. By 1919 currency notes were also in circulation. They were hard to come by since very few people had up to a pound in their possession at that time. It was particularly time consuming to change the notes into coins. Some of the Clerks in the District office at Ado would give eighteen shillings for a pound note. People accepted such unfair exchanges rather gladly.

Influenza - "*Lukuluku*" 1918

The first World War ended in 1918, and every-one in Ekiti rejoiced but the joy was short lived and marred because many Ekitis returned home with broken jaws and shattered noses and Influenza plagued the country.

Early morning of a day in October, 1918, an epidemic of Influenza broke out in Ekiti. Unfortunately, the cause was attributed to witchcraft and the anger of the gods. Many domestic animals were slaughtered to satisfy the blood-thirsty witches and wizards.

All over Ekiti, the remedies believed by the people to be always efficacious were applied. The Ede masqueraders, patrolled the street, vainly appeasing the gods. Everywhere in Ekiti the instructions of the Babalawos were followed - goats were killed and exposed outside the gates of every town and village to ward off the evil but the situation grew worse.

The Christians who were then the elite of the society believed it was the effect of the first world war which had just ended. But according to Chief Ajayi, the Odofin of Isaba—Ikole, some Anglican pastors, recalling the incident of David's census, thought that God was not pleased with the taking of the census of the people (Psm. 24, 10-15).

The epidemic raged fiercely for about six months and thinned down the population. The dead were not mourned. Many were not even buried.

The epidemic soon received the descriptive name of "Lukuluku" (killing by a sudden stroke). But when it became known that it was widely spread, it was called "Ajakale-Arun" (a disease

Fig. 5 – Some Settlements of Ekitiland

that spreads everywhere) Everywhere the people were instructed to keep indoors from 12 noon to 5p.m. during which it was believed that the evil spirits spreading the disease used to patrol the streets.

FIRST CENSUS AND TAXATION

The Ekitis were counted by the District Officers in 1919. It was not a complete census because only taxable male adults were counted. An entry of Fr. Wouters diary showed that the head tax of six shillings (60k) per head was introduced on 11th January 1919 in Ekiti. In the following year, 1920, they were taxed six shillings per head (flat rate). All the elders, (males) in every compound were bound to pay unless they were reasonably excused. Defaulters were punished if caught. If not found, the head of the compound received the punishment.

The collection of tax did not start in the same way in Ekiti. At Ode for instance, it began as "Ose Ogoloba" (Governor's collection). That approach was easily explained. The Whiteman was looked upon as being equal to or a partner of the gods.[1] "Ose" was usually collected for the gods. The people were used to it. It began with three shillings and was gradually raised to six shillings like that of other places.

In Otun, it was introduced as "Ose" but much earlier than in the south. In 1914, however, the Otuns refused to pay. Government attempted to use force. But in 1915, the youngsters set fire to all the houses in Otun, destroyed all properties and killed most of the chiefs who were supposed to have been responsible for the new form of Ose (Tax). In Ekiti, South, Central and West however, the demand was bluntly expressed: "Man above 16 years of age are to pay 6s each". Many thought of resisting but wise counsel prevailed. The country needed good roads and economic growth and paid workers to keep things going.

Idapada:

At the time tax payers were paying six shillings each, there was a return of six pence per tax payer. This amount was for some time shared quarter by quarter. But later on the District Officer

1. "Hence the terms" Oyinbo Ekeji orisa, Ogun to Oyinbo etc. (a whiteman is next to the gods) the god of iron is as great as a whiteman.

explained that the money was paid to certain important chiefs. It was the origin of Oba's and chief's salaries. Hence a Baale's salary did not depend on his position but on the number of tax payers under his control.

EKITI N.A. TREASURY

Many who paid the tax of 1920, refused to pay the following year. The tax collectors punished the defaulters. They made some of them open their eyes to the rays of the sun. They put the feet of some in the stocks. In some cases, the District Officer had to step in personally to ensure prompt collection.

The first effect of the poll tax was the establishment of the N.A. Treasury in the same year 1920. The total amount then collected was ₦6,552.00 (£3,276).

N.A. COURTS FINANCIAL RETURNS

Apart from the revenue from tax, there was some money from N.A. Courts as listed below: The courts were originally held under shady trees. Buildings were later erected in a few places, particularly Ado-Ekiti:

Year	*Total Revenue*		*Expenses*
1915	£ 69 : 16s 6d	(₦ 139.17k)	No—figures
1916	£ 433 : 9s : 4d	(₦ 266.83k)	do
1917	£ 771 : 1 : 10d	(₦ 542.11k)	do
1918	£ 873 : 4 : 3	(₦1746.43k)	do
1919	£ 585 : 12 : 3	(₦1171.23k)	£247 : 15 : 4d
1920	£ 802 : 16 : 6	(₦1605.44k)	£372 : 6 : 0d
1921	£ 731 : 16 : 0	(₦1463.60k)	£430 : 3 : 0d
1922	£ 820 : 14 : 4	(₦1641.44)	£590 : 10 : 0
1923	£1228 : 18 : 9	(₦2457.89	£545 : 6 : 0
1924	£ 938 : 3 : 10	(₦1876..40	£520 : 12 : 0
1925	£ 667 : 5 : 6	(₦1334.55)	£526 : 15 : 0
1926	£1066 : 6 : 6	(₦2132.65)	£541 : 0 : 5

1927	£1616 : 6 : 10	(₦3232.61)	£554 : 4 : 4
1928	£1114 : 5 : 0	(₦2228.50)	£586 : 15 : 0
1929	£1308 : 16 : 4	(₦2617.64)	£576 : 17 : 6
1930	£2065 : 11 : 10	(₦2131.11)	£546 : 0 : 0
1931	£ 731 : 2 : 5	(₦1462.25)	£582 : 11 : 8
1932	£ 591 : 10 : 5	(₦1183. 5)	£502 : 2 : 6
1933	£ 510 : 16 : 6	(₦1021.65)	£486 : 12 : 3
1934	£ 519 : 19 : 6	(₦1039.95)	£462 : 4 : 2

Second Pelupelu—1st March, 1920:

The Government of Ekiti had been centralised. A sole authority for Ekiti was desired but not feasible.

In Egba and Ijebu, a successful attempt was made by the British to make the Alake and the Awujale the only recognised mouthpiece of the Obas of these areas. The success thus achieved was an incentive to make the Ewi the sole authority in Ekiti. If the then Ewi had been able to speak English, there should have been no need for an interpreter who was always a third person. Some of the projects envisaged included (a) the insistence of the British Officers to see the Ewi obeyed by his Baale, (b) the deportation of the Olode and the Onimesi and (c) the invitation of the Ewi to the openning of the rail road at Oshogbo in 1908, (d) major institutions to be located in Ado including central hall, hospital and improved communications. The failure of the projects should be laid at the door of the clerks who filled their pockets with remunerations obtained by leaking out official secrets. The Obas were asked to meet at Ado-Ekiti. The meeting (Pelupelu) was attended by all with great pomp and pageantry.

At this particular "Pelupelu", the Obas agreed to introduce some sweeping changes, namely: poll tax (Owo Ile), Native Court and Divorce. The D.O. forbid the destruction of palm-trees and other useful trees such as Iroko, Ogao and Apepe. The discussion resulted in forest reservation, as shown in this table.

Name	*Date*	*Gazette No.*
1. Ogbese Forest	20/12/22	No. 35 of 12/6/30
2. Ise Forest	1/12/25	No. 26 of 14/5/31
3. Ikere Forest	1/12/25	No. 36 of 19/6/30
4. Ara Forest	30/11/26	No. 7 of 9/2/33 Supplement.

The pelupelu became the forum whereby government policy was always made public. It was also the court for criminal cases, but its judgement was subject to the review of a British Official. In this way, the independence of Ekiti Obas was gradually taken away without a hitch.

The pelupelu continued to be held until about 1952, when Local Government law was introduced, and salaries rather than tokens were paid to Ekiti Obas.

NATIVE AUTHORITY COURTS 1920

Before the introduction of the British rule, civil cases were tried by quarter chiefs or Baales. An appeal in this cases was made to the Oba/Owa who either settled them personally or in council. The council was composed of the Palace Chiefs, generally old and experienced people. Criminal cases were tried by the Elegbes without any appeal. In 1920, when the British judicial system was introduced, these native courts were started in Ado, Ikole and Ijero. Some Obas objected to them because the plan of the Government would upset their own hold on the people. However, they

able in such a manner. Many right thinking people learned a big lesson from such Judgement and rarely went to court. They were always satisfied with the pacification by their Oba/Baale.

4. In an Oba's court, quarrels were often settled by delaying tactics. In a Native Authority court, delay meant nothing, the court could settled a case many months old unless the parties concerned withdrew it from court.

The members of the Native Authority court were at first not formally trained for their job. Sometimes they misused their authority and committed a lot of excess; gradually, however, the Native court became fruitful source of revenue and legitimately put a stop to the Oba's court.

Court:

For many years, Ekiti people were law abiding. The influence of foreign elements inclined the people to crimes: The number o such crimes and civil cases in the early years are shown in this table

Year	*Criminal*	*Adultery*	*Civil*	*Total*
1915	25	—	148	173
1916	117	—	339	456
1917	359	—	425	784
1918	447	—	448	883
1919	235	—	448	723
1920	407	—	603	1010
1921	234	14	538	786
1922	415	59	584	1058
1923	363	44	483	890
1924	234	97	542	873
1925	270	55	366	691
1926	190	106	948	1244
1927	270	97	577	944
1928	190	44	337	774
1929	264	49	710	1023
1930	264	30	807	1001
1931	253	33	580	869
1932	222	47	566	835
1933	164	40	402	806
1934	224	20	541	791

DIVORCE

By native law and custom, a woman belong to her husban
life and even when death parted them, a woman still belong
the family of her deceased husband. There was no separation.
might run away from her lawful husband for many years, she
her children still remained the property of her lawful husb
When the law of divorce was introduced, women became c
cious of a new kind of freedom which was soon abused
developed into licence.

By the law of divorce a woman could free herself by the refu
in full or in part, of the dowry paid on her by her husband.

For a time, divorce caused untold confusion. Many husbar
who went to farm in the morning with the intention of comi
back for a good meal in the evening returned to be given a pie
of paper instead of their meals. The paper was a notice of divor
stating time of court hearing. The anger engendered on such a
occasion led to terrible disorder and murder in certain case

Divorce destroyed the love which should exist between husban
and wife. Presents to the intended or to the wife became mer
loans. The girl or the woman kept strict account of such present
with the view of refunding their value or the equivalent if she
happened to go to another man.

With divorce arose the problem of the legitimacy of children.
As a result children suffered untold injustice and neglect resulting
in death in some cases. Another result of divorce was the gradual
cessation of the customary practice of giving female children to
husbands as soon as they were born. A suitor who used to serve
the father-in-law as if he were a slave gave up the practice. He
had to wait till the girls were of age before making a choice. In
most cases a father-in-law might not know the husband of his
daughter for a long time. Today, most of Ekiti girls choose their
own husbands. Divorce in Ekiti courts is now a result of ill-treat-
ment felt mainly by the wife or greediness on the part of a
woman who anticipates better care elsewhere.

EMPIRE DAY MAY 24TH 1920

The first recorded Empire Day Celebration in Ekiti was held on May 24th 1920. The Schools in Ekiti from Aramoko, Ikere, Uyin, Ayede, Ifaki, Ushi and Ijero were among those which attended

the Empire Day celebration at Ado-Ekiti. Sports were held. Winners were given prizes. The Empire Day celebration was always organised by the District Officer popularly called D.O. There was always a rally of school children during which the message of the British king or queen was read. "God save the King/Queen" was always sung with joy and pride. The British Officials took Empire Day very seriously and hard preparations were always made for it. What really interested the children was the fact that they would see children from other schools and be seen. In those days there was no excursion and the pupils were not too young to make comparisons which should be beneficial to themselves and to their schools.

The Greatest encouragement which came from the Government to schools in those days was the celebration of Empire Day. The history of it was not clear to school children but one thing was certain that Anglican (C.M.S.) school represented by Emmanuel school and St. George's Catholic School would once more meet in the field of sports. The Catholics were always sure of winning the three legged race, tug-of-war and high jump. The rest might be won fifty-fifty.

In 1926, the total number of school children who participated in Empire Day Celebration was about two hundred. Both teachers and pupils were feasted on "Iyan" (pounded yam). In this way both price-winners and onlookers gained something - good feeding. As far as schools were concerned, the greatest thing at the time was the Empire Day. For many years, there was only one centre, Ado-Ekiti to take part in Empire Day celebration.

For the first few years, the junior pole vault was won first by Mr. T.A. Samuel of St. George's Catholic School and later on by either Mr. Ojo Idowu of Emmanuel School or by George Ayo of the Catholic School. The high jump was always won by Mr. Julius Owolabi and the second to him was Mr. Stephen Fasina. Both of them were from St. George's School. Another bone of contention was the tug of war. From 1924 to 1928, Father Laugel's figure dominated the field. Many thought that his boys always won by means of prayer. The fact was that there were more grown-up pupils in St. George's than in Emmanuel School.

By about 1934, Empire Day celebration was decentralised. The following extract from the minutes of a special Committee on the Empire Day celebration in 1939 portrayed the general trend. The following resolution were passed:

1. That Empire Day celebrations this year (1939) should invariably be held in four different centres, namely: Ado-Ekiti, Akure, Ijero and Ikole.
2. That sports should be held in the four centres and prizes distributed to winners.
3. That the following should be the order of distribution of schools to the four centres namely:

At Ikole: All schools in Ikole, Oye, Itaji, Ayede and Ishan Districts.
At Ijero: All schools in Ijero, Otun, Ara, Effon, Okemesi and Ido Districts.
At Akure: All schools in Akure, Ise and Emure Districts.
At Ado: All schools in Ado, Ikere, Ogotun and Ifaki District.

4. That it should be part of the duties of the Secretaries to arrange their own committees and to frame up programmes of events etc. and will be in entire charge of their areas in consultation with local Obas.
5. The Chairman hoped to visit all the four centres on the day of celebration. (The District Officer was the chairman. He probably intended to take the salute personally).
6. The Chairman stated that the Obas and the committees in the different centres have consented to provide feasts for the school children on that day.
7. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Native Administration will provide 30/- for prizes and 60/- for shield events. But now that there will be no shield competitions, the total sum of 90/- will be used for prizes.

Vaccination:

In June 1920, an awful epidemic or plague of small pox burst on the people. Every town or village went all out to offer sacrifice to appease Soponno, the god of small pox. No other remedy was envisaged. There was no hosiptal, dispensary or clinic. The belie was that it had no remedy intensified the idea of sacrifice. Though many sufferred from it, few lives were lost. But after recovery, some became half blind, others had spotted faces. One result of the severe attack was the introduction of vaccination. But the Sanitary Officers on the job were too few, and the people needed enlightenment on the value of vaccination. All possible steps were taken by the individual to escape being vaccinated.

t of Governor Sir Clifford:

His Excellency, Governor Sir Clifford, visited Ondo Province 20th September, 1920. All the crowned Ekiti Obas met him Akure. Most Ekiti people who accompanied their Obas saw rs for the first time; there have being no motorable roads in Ekiti the time. Around that time some people in the name of Governent searched for wooden masks from house to house and accused ne owners of not getting permission for the wood used for the nasks.

They threatened arrest and carried away the masks.

Chapter Fourteen

SOWING THE SEED OF TROUBLE

The establishment of N.A. Courts gave room to the British law which gradually set aside Ekiti laws and customs. In particular, the police replaced the Elegbes.

Ayegunle, 1922

By 1918, the first World War was over. Many Ekitis who enrolled as soldiers returned home to find their country very shabby and uninviting. Some of them like Ogun-Ado of Okeyinmi, became very bitter and behaved as if he were in the war front. Others particularly those in Ayede, Isan, Itaji and Egbe-Oba reasoned together and advised their people to build a model town. The advice was tried in 1922, in a place called "Ayegunle". A beautiful site was chosen for the new town to be erected between Ayede and Ikole, very close to the old site of Ootunja (Ikole). But there was a sharp disagreement between the group on the one hand and the Elekole Adeleye I on the other. The Elekole Adeleye I was before his accession in the Police Force. He was familiar with the Government and knew where to appeal to in case of necessity.

The Elekole raised no objection to building a model town at Ayegunle but he thought his palace should first be erected there before any other building. The Elekole justly feared the loss of his hold over the people. The group under the leadership of the Olomode'gbira of Ayedun, the Onise of Araromi and Mr. Omoleye of Usin could not agree because although, Egbe-Oba formed the majority of those who planned the shifting, if the influence of the Elekole should be paramount there, there would be a conflict of authority. Other Ekiti Kingdoms—Oye, Ire, Ayede, Isan and Itaji etc, could equally claim rights over the model town, because their own Oba and men were there.

The Elekole however secured the assistance of the British Government and evicted them from the site. The leaders were punished.

Prison 1923

Changes came in, in rapid succession. The building of prison yard at Ado-Ekiti was the next object of admiration. Ondo and Akure refused to have prison yards in their towns, Ekiti had no such unanimous voice. At any rate it was hardly necessary to ask for an opinion, because Ekiti normally co-operated with British Officers. The prison building went up fast at Ado. On week days the prisoners worked like government labourers but without pay. Women were conspicuously absent. They had not the courage to commit crimes in those days.

On Sunday, the prisoners washed their jumpers and buba. They were made to dance round naked. After some years women were also included among the prisoners. Prison cells were then enlarged and separate apartments were erected for women and dancing round naked stopped. The horror inspired by the idea of going to prison was really great and terrifying. Prisoners were treated as outcasts. Everyone who had any sense of shame kept away not only from crime but also from minor faults. Until about 1925, there were no political prisoners. The first group of political prisoners came from Ilawe during the Alawe's agitation for independence. Political prisoners tended to lessen the horror of imprisonment. Because of the prison, the term Ado acquired an obnoxious meaning in the sense that "going to Ado meant in some parts of Ekiti, "going to the prison". That usage was quite distinct from "going to Ado-Ekiti" which meant going to the town.

In 1923, the Ekiti Judicial Council was constituted with grade "B" powers and to determine all causes of action affecting land, whatever the value, in the Ekiti Division. It was granted power to hear all appeals from the Native Courts in the Division and to exercise the executive functions of a Native Authority. The Elekole Adeleye I was appointed permanent president and the membership was limited to the other fifteen Obas of Ekiti.

Dual Tribute—1924

Before Ekiti came under the British Rule, Ekiti Obas received customary tribute from their subjects. The tribute consisted of yams, kolanuts, palm-wine and so on. The tribute was always given during one indigenous festival or the other. When Ekiti came under the British Rule and the Obas began to be paid salaries,

the tribute continued to flow in from the subjects. British Officials knew of that, but they could not do anything about it directly, since they were forbidden to antagonise the Obas.[1] However there was complaint here and there from Christian Communities who have no objection to giving tribute to an Oba, provided the tribute was not intended for pagan worship. At Ido however, the Olojido Oba Atewogboye reported the Christians in his area of jurisdiction to the government that they refused to give him the customary game tribute during "Obayuro" festival. When the objection became too persistent the District Officer, Captain Pullen intervened. Although he knew the demand was unjust and illegal, he did not want to antagonise the Olojudo. Unjust—because the Christians were paying tax: illegal, because Obas were receiving salaries from government. The D.O. maintained a discreet silence. He neither wished to hurt the Oba's feeling, nor encourage the Christians. He sympathised with the Christians and tried to please the Olojido. He asked the Christians to give the game tribute two months after the feast in this way the idea of providing meat for pagan sacrifice would be removed and the right of the Olojido preserved. The Christians were happy over the District Officer's decision but the Olojido was not. The case was referred to the Resident, C.H. Findlay, who summoned a meeting of all concerned. The meeting was held on 20th November, 1924 at Ushi-Ekiti.

Present at the meeting were Bishop Ferdinand Terrien, the Resident himself, Fathers George Laugel and Anthony Brungard, Captain Pullen and his Assistant District Officer, Mr. J.W. Norcott. After listening to both sides, the Resident decided that the tribute should be given annually at Christmas. The Olojido surely saw the impracticability of this decision. It was a nice way of telling him to take nothing from the Christians, this new decision was better than the previous one and Captain Pullen assured Bishop Terrien that he would contact the Heads of the other Christian denominations to get their members to pay their tribute at Christmas. For the other Ekiti Obas, it was a question of "Ab uno disce omnes".

1. See Lugard's Instruction to Residents p. 137.

Aeroplane:

Although in 1926, only the District Officers and the Missionaries read newspapers in Ekiti, the news of an aeroplane touching the ground for the first time infiltrated into Ekiti within a few weeks. The song which the Lagosians sang on seeing the aeroplane also reached Ekiti as follows:

"Mo ri mo ri kini kan	I see, I see something
To fo 'lofurufuru	Flying in the air
O lapa bi eiye	It has wings like a bird
O nfo bi eiye	It is flying in the air
O lese bi eiye	It has feet like a bird
O nfo l'ofurufuru" etc.	Flying in the air

Ase Iyena 1925*:*

For many years the greatest evil that plagued society at Ado-Ekiti was the festival called "Ase Iyena". Many youngsters between the ages of eighteen and thirty plunged themselves into debts in order to please the society in the way they celebrated the feast. Many of them had to pawn their younger brothers and sisters to get money, to provide the food and drinks necessary for the occasion. The feast lasted a day but the eating and drinking accompanying the occasion usually lasted a week before and a week after.

The greatest good the Ewi Adewumi (1910-1936) did Ado was the stopping of the feast. It was difficult but he did it with amazing success.

Until 1921, there were seven gates leading to Ado-Ekiti township and all paths leading to those gates were bush paths kept in good repairs by officers appointed for the purpose. The major paths were from (i) Okesa to Uyin (Iyin), (ii) Irona to Ilawe, (iii) Ijigbo to Ikere, (iv) Idofin to Awajin, (v) Iremo to Ago, (vi) Idolofin to Ijan and (vii) Oke'la to Are.

The first was cleared from Okesa to Okiti Origbo, near the site of the present Textile Mill, the second from Irona to Asikona, near the present site of the Ile-Abiye, the third from Ijigbo to Ekute, near the present site of St. Joseph's Technical School, the fourth from Idofin to Eran Oloba, near the present site of the Government Agricultural farm, the fifth from Idemo to Umesi,

the sixth from Idolofin to Omi Olori and the seventh from Okela to Ajurere.

Although Ase Iyena was stopped in 1925, its baneful effects lingered on. Many who incurred heavy debts as a result of it could not find their feet on the ground for many years after. Furthermore, while many from other parts of Ekiti sent their children to Ado for education, the Ados themselves for many years were not able to educate their children.

Scouting:

In about 1925, scouting started in Ekiti, first at Ikere-Ekiti. The Ikere boys scout used to accompany the Ogoga to "Pelupelu". Their activities on such occasion were impressive and enhanced the prestige of the Ogoga. It was soon introduced to Emmanuel School Ado-Ekiti.

In 1927, Revd. Fr. Fuchs introduced another form of Scouting into the Catholic School, Ado-Ekiti. It made a deep impression on the people, attracted children to school and excited the interest of those already in school. Unfortunately Father Laugel was not interested in Scouting for the following reasons:

1. Scouting was not suitable for rural areas where most of the children should be taught to help their parents on the farms.
2. Scouting, as practised by school children in Lagos did not speak creditably for the movement. The children developed a rascally disposition that would alienate parents in rural areas.
3. Multiplying scout organisations in a country like Nigeria was bound to have adverse effects on denominational relationships. As the English Government was solidly behind the C.M.S. Church and Baden Powell Scouts, any other brand of the scout movement was not likely to be well received.

"Rat Flu"

Some parts of Ekiti, particularly Ido area were attacked in 1926 by "Rat Flu". It was a new type of illness and killed fast. The main remedy was destruction of rats. The District Officer, Captain Pullen lost no time to get the people to wage war on

filthiness. That was the only remedy at their command. In the following year, 1927, the road between Ifaki and Orin-Ido was built by communal labour. In the same year a serious fire broke out in which six persons lost their lives at Orin-Ido.

In 1928, the poll tax was changed to income tax payable according to a person's means and subject to a minimum of nine shillings (ninety kobo) per tax payer. This increase led to tax agitation in Ido-Faboro.

In 1929, the road from Ado to Ara was opened. This road gave a great impetus to trade since it brought Ilesa, Ibadan and Lagos closer to Ekiti by twelve miles. In the following year, 1930, Mr. W.G. - Wosmal, A.D.O. surveyed the Ado to Ikare road and the work began in 1932. In that same year, Iworoko to Iluomoba road was built by Igbemo people.

PROPHET JOSEPH BABALOLA

Mr. Joseph Babalola was an Ilofa (Ilorin) man. He was the son of Mr. Rotimi, a farmer. Early in life Joseph was a blacksmith but his second employment as a roller driver was more lucrative. It was at this latter occupation that Joseph Babalola got his vocation as a prophet in 1930. He preached at Ibadan and Ilesa and founded the Aladura Church. Then he came to Effon in Ekiti. His success at Effon was rather spectacular. He no sooner arrived there than the people put up a two storey building for him. Effon then became the headquarters of the new religious movement.

From Effon he pushed on to Ado-Ekiti in 1931 and settled at Igede where he was more successful. In 1932, he visited Benin-City where he was imprisoned for six months. He returned to Effon for further religious activities. He had many followers at Effon and died there in 1968. His religious sect was known as Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C.) or simply Aladura. The sect abstains from the use of medicine and palm wine. The C.A.C. sponsored many schools in Ekiti and a Teacher Training College and Grammar School in Effon Alaye stand in memory of Joseph Babalola.

THE OORE RETURNED TO EKITI - 1936

Oore Olubiyin II ascended the throne in 1930. From the start he had been struggling to free himself from the yoke of Ilorin. In 1934, the Resident, Mr. Daniel visited Otun from Ilorin. He examined the complaints of the Oore and was satisfied, the Oore was really anxious to return to Ekiti. The return was effected on 25th January 1936.

The Oore came to Ado - Ekiti on Empire-Day, 24th May, 1936 and was warmly received by his brother Ekiti Obas. He expressed gratitude to the Government. On September 10th 1936, the Oore attended the Ekiti Pelupelu during which the Governor, Sir Bernard Bourdillon was present. At the dinner arranged for the Obas in the evening of that day, the Oore again took his seat among his brother Ekiti Obas with great joy. He was warmly congratulated by all the others. There was much rejoicing.

In 1937, the Governor visited Otun and was warmly received by the Oore and his people. In the same year, the masqueraders forgetting that they were no longer under Ilorin, flogged Mr. George Abiodun and destroyed his house and property. Mr. George Abiodun was the leader of the Catholic Community at Otun. The traditional worshippers were probably jealous of the progress of the members under his leadership. The case was settled by the District Officer and compensation was paid.

In 1938, the son of Mr. & Mrs. Faluyi of Ilaro quarters Otun was missing and could not be traced. This incident marred the joy of Otun people in respect of their freedom from the Ilorins. Nevertheless the Pelupelu of 1939 was held at Otun to mark the integration of Otun with Ekiti. On this occasion, the Oore expressed mixed feelings of joy and sorrow: although Otun was brought back to Ekiti which was a matter of joy, the villages previously under Otun were left under Ilorin which caused him sorrow. Further accounts of the return of Otun to Ekiti can be found in Mr. D. Atolagbe's booklet "Itan Oore, Otun ati Moba".

TRADE AMONG EKITI WOMEN - 1937

After the Kiriji war, many Oyos settled in Ekiti. Their wives began to produce Ogi, Eko and Akara. Some of them were engaged in dyeing while their husbands were weavers. Ekiti women

learnt both food production for sale and dyeing partly from Oyo women. In addition Ekiti women who served as slaves in Egba and Ibadan had firsthand knowledge there of how food was prepared for sale. If in any settlement the introduction of any particular food stuff was followed or coincided with some serious incidents like a severe small-pox or fire or fever or infant mortality etc. the sale of such food-stuff would be forbidden in that settlement. Thus for a long time the sale of Iyan (pounded yam) was prohibited at Ado-Ekiti.

Ekiti women were on the whole versatile traders. They traded in food-stuffs including meat products and clothing materials inparticular. Dyeing was a major occupation which produced various trading materials.

Dyeing:

Some of Ekiti women and Oyo wives were engaged in dyeing. "Elu" was obtained from the edge of the forests, particularly at Ekan and Emure, where "Elu" trees were actually cultivated. The trade was profitable. It was more rewarding than spinning and weaving. Hence the saying "A ji moju aro ki i bosi ku". (She never becomes poor who is actively engaged in dyeing).

Many Ekiti women who had a good number of slaves were engaged in spinning, dying and weaving. Such women were richer than many men. Apart from the sale of food, spinning, weaving and dyeing, Ekiti women were also engaged in making pots and mats. Afao, Isan, and Ara women specialised in pot making. Afao pots were heavy and durable. They were used for storing water. Ara Pots were used for cooking stews.

Ipoti and Effon women were good at making mats. Ipoti mats were superior to those of Effon and were mainly used as bed spread. Effon mats were used for parking and sunning farm produce. They were often finely coloured and soft.

It should be noted that the type of jobs enumerated above did not warrant travelling far from the home. Ekiti husbands were more particular about their food than the money the wife would make by trading.

In 1931, most Ekiti women had to give up dyeing for two principal reasons. Firstly Europeans manufactured dyed cloths began to swamp the market. Secondly, Adire cloths produced in Abe-

okuta were becoming widely available. They were lig
cheaper than Ekiti cloths, often described jokingly as "
sun le mi" (mother who lies on me). Attention was n
to sales of certain articles like European plates and cloths
Ifelodun" was formed at that time at Ado-Ekiti. Mrs.
Aladesanmi was their first lady president. Egbe Onim
(Sewing Society) was also formed at about the same time.

By 1938, women traders began travelling far and wide.
every Ekiti central town had a group of women going to I
and Lagos for European cloths and to Abeokuta for Adire
They formed associations of sellers of plates and food-stuffs.
also travelled to Onitsha for rice and palm oil, and to Ag
for smoked fish.

Chapter Fifteen

THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF BRITISH RULE IN EKITI 1913—1939

1. *Peace:*

The peace initialled at Kiriji was rigorously enforced as soon as British Officials began to visit Ekiti. Offenders were either threatened or punished and made to keep the law. Minor disturbances arose from divorce and taxation. British Officials at the time sponsored the cause of Ekiti Obas and helped to preserve the continuity of the institution. In addition, the Officials were required to uphold justice at all times. "Beyond the confines of Lagos the new administrator.....was obliged to be perpetually watchful in his work of enforcing justice and preserving peace"[1].

2. *Protection:* British Officials protected the people:-

(*a*) *From Hot Drinks:* It was usual for colonia masters to boost their trade by weaking the inhabitants of the colony with hot drinks. Luckily for Ekiti such an influence did not reach Ekiti. In fact most missionaries in Ekiti were not interested on the importation of hot drinks. The writer remembered a missionary who once described gin as an extraction from European excreta, simply to make people hate hot drinks. In 1919 the Lagos Standard carried the news that liqour Traffic in Nigeria was prohibited. In its words, "liqour traffic in Nigeria has by order in council received its death blow". British traders were not forbidden to sell hot drinks but the prices were abnormally raised. The ordinary man could not aford it.

(*b*) *From Fire-arms:* Ekiti were also forbidden to carry fire-arms. Ekiti were law abiding and of mild disposition. The fear therefore was not of manslaughter or murder but of committing suicide which was considered honourable by Ekitis at the time.

1. Ellen Thorp, Ladder of Bones, p. 249.

(*c*) *From Worship of Shango:* Shango is the god of thunder, and in his honour his priests used to set fire to houses and then extort fees from the inmates in order to avert from them Shango's further wrath.[1] The District Officer did all he could to ban Shango worship in Ekiti. The greatest revenge on a neighbour was to set fire to his building. At that time, all houses in Ekiti were thatched. A Shango worshiper was fined ₦100.00 at Ibadan in 1900 for setting fire to buildings. The news of the heavy fine became a deterent in Ekiti and the people readily obeyed their District Officer.

(*d*) *Burglary:* In many Ekiti towns, theft was rare, in Ekiti central towns, however, burglary was a menace. British officials had difficulty in curbing burglary. They were tactful and firm but delay in punishing burglary was largely responsible for their failure.

(*e*) *Removal of Isolation:* Ekiti Obas were stopped from living in isolation. They were asked to come together, to reason together and make law for the common good of Ekiti.

(*f*) *Marriage*: The greatest and the most depressing impact the British made in Ekiti was the sudden change in Ekiti Marriage. The immediate effect was destruction of life. Between 1916 and 1930, many lives were lost as a result of divorce. As from 1930, Ekiti gradually became used to divorce. Daughters were no longer given to suitors. Girls had to choose their husbands. Parents lost their control over their children.

Unfortunately the introduction of Christian marriage coincided with that of divorce and so lessened the appreciation the people should have for Christian marriage.

(*g*) *Protection from the worship of Shopono:* Small-pox is a terrible contagious and devastating disease. When it broke out at Ibadan in 1911, the chief priest of Shopono was arrested and in this way, the cult was not allowed to spread to Ekiti.

"Small-pox was fostered by the priests of Shopono, the god of small-pox whose devotees accord him honour by disseminating the scales from persons suffering from the disease. When caught, the chief priests of a cult were arrested and either fined or sentenced to imprisonment, and their insignia burnt"[2]

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1. Ellen Thorp, Ladder of Bones, page 250.
2. Ladder of Bones page 250.

(*h*) *Commerce:* The British encouraged arts of peaceful commerce. Before 1900, the Ekiti knew nothing about European traders. Europeans did not try to open shops anywhere in Ekiti. The Syrians made a meagre attempt at Ado Ekiti in 1928/29 and soon packed up. All that Ekiti needed were cloths and farming materials no cold store, no tinned food. etc.

3. *Sanitation:*

In Ekiti, the British officials waged a relentless war on yaws, small-pox and guinea-worms. Innoculation against yaws and small-pox was introduced and encouraged. But unfortunately, the sanitary officers were few. They employed the services of their servants who often made the incisions too deep. Some became deep sores and made people run away as soon as the presence of sanitary officers was announced. Guinea-worms did not kill but rendered the life of their victims miserable and inactive. Efforts were made to sink wells in many places, in order to obtain water free from guinea-worm infection.

4. *Medicine:*

Although, many Ekiti knew one kind of leaf or the other as a cure of *malaria*, they often drank too much of such preparations. More died of over-dose than of the fever. The commonest European drug in Ekiti at the time was liquid *quinine*. The tendency to over-dosage was also high in using quinine.

Dispensary and maternity Homes were opened at Ado in 1929. Infant mortality was thus reduced. Egosi (now Ilupeju) and Ifaki also had dispensaries. Wounds and sores were better handled.

Subjects who were naturally law abiding made rapid progress under a leadership which was aware that it had everything to gain if the directives were good. British diplomacy claimed priority in this respect.

Chapter Sixteen

PROSPERITY AND DEPRESSION IN EKITI 1918—1939

Ekiti experienced its own periods of prosperity and depression much like the biblical "Seven years of plenty and seven years of famine" (Gen. 41:28-29).

(*a*) *Prosperity:* The Influensa of 1918 lasted six months and after that Ekiti began to enjoy a period of prosperity which continued until about 1931. Demand for palm oil, palm kernel, cotton and Aso Oke, pots and Calabashes was great. Men and women were kept busy collecting palm-oil and palm-kernel, spinning and weaving cloths, and making native lamps, mats, baskets, brooms and so on. People were able to purchase what were denied them during the first World war. Trade thus remained good till about 1931.

(*b*) *Depression:* 1931-1939: After the war, Europeans went round to Native weavers, and the dyers and the potters. They saw the women at work and put questions to them. They soon produced designs similar to those of Ekiti women but at cheaper rates. Ekiti women were thus put out of job, European materials which were light and less costly soon flooded the market. The major firms competed keenly by lowering the prices of their articles. The depression affected many things, namely:-

1. *Trade:*

Both Government and private persons had less money. A kerosine tin of palm oil which formerly cost 40k was sold for 10k. One penny worth of yams would feed three persons. A sack of groundnut which formerly cost one naira was sold for forty kobo (40k). Blanket formerly sold for one naira went for 15k, Singlet which formerly cost 35k was sold for 09k. 10 yards of shirting was sold for 45k. A pair of tennis shoes was sold for 13k.

2. *Government workers:*

Many Government workers were retrenched to cut down expenses.

3. *Local Government:*

Chiefs were regrouped to reduce expenses.

4. *Court Reforms:*

At the material time Governor Donald Cammeron was on the seat. He made some reforms in courts to reduce expenses.

5. Dispensaries were built in rural areas instead of Hospital. As from 1935, trade and finances improved gradually. By 1939, normality returned to the country.

DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria began to have one government as from 1914 and at the same time, war broke out in Europe. The war affected the development in every nook and corner of the country. Ekiti was not an exception. Two main aspects of Ekiti development were not too drastically affected, namely: road construction, and education.

Road Construction: (*Stage two*)

In 1912, a road suitable for cycling across Ekiti was built. The District Officer was then able to use a bicycle and later on a motor-cycle.

From April 1921, the road between Ikere and Ado was under construction. Mr. Jackson, the Assistant District Officer at Ado-Ekiti was responsible for the construction of the road. According to Ellen Thorp. "The District Officers of those days were jacks of all trades and also masters of something dictated by common sense. Those were the days of paternal rule..... uncomplicated by such things as Magistrates, Courts and the subtlesties of Lawyers "In his person he (the District Officer) combined

more offices than did even pooh Bah, for he had to be Magistrate, Chief Constable, Treasurer, Accountant, Doctor, Engineer, Surveyor and Inspector".[1]

A motorable road from Oshogbo to the East passed through Akure. Lagos was linked with Oshogbo by train and from there there is road link through Ekiti to Benin and the East.

In 1921, however, a motorable road was built across Ekiti to Otun, partly by communal labour, and partly by paid labour. The road connected Otun with Igbara-Oke, passing through Igbara-Odo, Ikere, Ado and Ido Faboro. The road was very narrow but the bridges were fairly solid. The road was hedged on both sides with lemon grass. It was soon discovered that though lemon grass prevented erosion, it also made the narrow road narrower as it grew rapidly sideways. Moreover, lemon grass harboured snakes which made the road unsafe for walkers. In the following year, 1922, cars began to ply the road. That same year, the Olojido Adejuwon got his car. He was the first among Ekiti Obas to own a car.

Many Ekiti towns and villages which were not along the main road either began to make preparations to shift to the main road or to build a road to their towns. Ilawe was the first to make the move. Assisted by Igbara-Odo, the Igbara-Odo/Ilawe road was started and partially completed in 1923.

Another motorable road across Ekiti connecting Erinmo with Omuo through Effon, Aramoko, Ijero, Ido Faboro, Ifaki, Egosi (now Ilupeju), and Ikole was started. But the most interesting plan was that of building a motorable road connecting Ado-Ekiti with Aramoko through Uyin (now Iyin) and Igede. This part of Ekiti was partly very rugged and partly very swampy. The saying was that "A pe k'an si r'alupupu l'Uyin" (It will be a long time before a motorcycle is used at Iyin). The miracle was worked when the motorable road was completed in 1929. Good roads created economic activities, intensified the pursuance of trade, made life easier and enjoyable, enriched the people and contributed to their progress physically and mentally.

1. Ellen Thorp, Ladder of Bones, p. 258.

2. *Education:*

As I have said above, under School Education, by 1940, Ekiti became very thirsty for education, about eighty percent Ekiti boys and forty percent Ekiti girls were in Schools working very hard at their lessons. Morality was high and Missionaries were in full control of schools but the aim was no longer to supply personnel for religion. Schools had become an asset to family progress and had raised the standard of living in towns and villages.